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**The German Invasion of Yugoslavia:
Insights For Crisis Action Planning
And Operational Art in A Combined
Environment**

**A Monograph
by
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ABSTRACT

THE GERMAN INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA: INSIGHTS FOR CRISIS ACTION PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL ART IN A COMBINED ENVIRONMENT. By MAJ Daniel L. Zajac, USA, 67 pages.

This monograph seeks to determine what implications for crisis action planning and operational art in combined environments can be derived from the German experience in the invasion of Yugoslavia (April 1941). This study has two collateral functions. First, from an historical standpoint, it highlights the state of German operational art between campaigns in France and Russia. Second, it provides a concise summary of the German invasion for military professionals currently exploring the history of warfare in Yugoslavia.

On 27 March 1941, Adolf Hitler informed key political and military leaders of Nazi Germany that he had decided to invade Yugoslavia at the earliest possible moment. Prior to that meeting, the Wehrmacht was preparing for the invasions of Greece and Russia, and had no plans for an attack on Yugoslavia. However, by 5 April they had developed a campaign plan—OPERATION 25—and staged 21 divisions in Austria and three allied nations for the invasion. Furthermore, they coordinated their operation with four allied nations, two of whom join in the attack. OPERATION 25 began on 6 April and on the 18th Yugoslavia capitulated. The campaign moved from concept to termination in 23 days. Despite weak Yugoslav opposition, the German feat of arms was a remarkably successful example of crisis response and operational art in a combined environment. An analysis of OPERATION 25 offers valuable insights for the U.S. military today.

The focus of this monograph is limited to crisis action procedures involving the commitment of military force. It is further limited to operational art in a combined environment. Specifically, the monograph compares the German reaction to the Yugoslav crisis in 1941 with the six "Time Sensitive Planning Phases" described in Joint Publication 5-02.4, Joint Operation Planning System, Volume IV, Crisis Action Procedures (JOPS Volume IV). It identifies significant differences and similarities that have implications for U.S. doctrine. The monograph applies the same approach to the characteristics of operational art found in Field Manual 100-5, Operations. Here the study examines the relationship between military means and political ends; the integration of tactics, operations and strategy to achieve political ends; centers of gravity; and the sequence of the campaign. Combined operations are addressed when they impact on crisis action planning and operational art.

The monograph concludes that the German reaction to the Yugoslav Crisis was similar to current U.S. doctrine for crisis action. The same is true for the U.S. Army's concept of operational art. Implications drawn from the study indicate a need to include guidelines for combined operations, conflict termination and postconflict operations in crisis action procedures. Likewise, current doctrine for combined operations should address time sensitive planning in a combined environment. Finally, this analysis of OPERATION 25, supports current doctrine by providing an historical precedent where similar methodologies were successfully employed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 27 March 1941, Adolf Hitler informed key political and military leaders of Nazi Germany that he had decided to invade Yugoslavia at the earliest possible moment. Prior to that meeting, the Wehrmacht was preparing for the invasions of Greece and Russia, and had no plan for an attack on Yugoslavia. However, by 5 April they had developed a campaign plan—OPERATION 25—and staged 21 divisions in Austria and three allied nations for the invasion. Furthermore, they coordinated their operation with four allied nations, two of whom would join in the attack. OPERATION 25 began on 6 April, and on the 18th, Yugoslavia capitulated. The campaign moved from concept to termination in 23 days. Despite weak Yugoslavian opposition, the German feat of arms was a remarkably successful example of crisis response and operational art in a combined environment. An analysis of OPERATION 25 offers valuable insights for the U.S. military today.¹

Despite the end of the Cold War a myriad of unpredictable threats still endanger the vital interests of United States. This situation is complicated by a strategic environment where U.S. involvement in coalition warfare appears likely. In this setting the probability of U.S. military responses to crises in combined environments has increased. Unfortunately, current U.S. doctrine for crisis action procedures, embodied in Joint Publication 5-02.4, Joint Operation Planning System, Volume IV, Crisis Action Procedures (JOPS Volume IV), makes no reference to combined operations. Similarly, Field Manual 100-8, Combined Army Operations (FM 100-8) fails to address crisis action in combined environments.

This monograph explores the invasion of Yugoslavia to determine what insights for crisis action procedures (CAP) and operational art in combined environments can be derived from the German experience. The breadth of this

subject requires limits. Therefore, the focus is limited to crisis action procedures—involving the commitment of military force—and operational art in a combined environment. This study contributes to the body of evidence that supports current doctrine and provides insights for that doctrine's reevaluation. This paper has two collateral functions. First, it highlights the state of German operational art between campaigns in France and Russia. Second, it provides a concise analysis of OPERATION 25 for military professionals exploring the history of war in Yugoslavia.

Specifically, the monograph compares the German reaction to the Yugoslav crisis in 1941 with the six "Time Sensitive Planning Phases" described in JOPS Volume IV. It identifies significant differences and similarities that have implications for U.S. doctrine. The monograph applies the same approach to the characteristics of operational art found in FM 100-5. Here, the study examines the relationship between military means and political ends; the integration of tactics, operations and strategy to achieve political ends; the centers of gravity; and the sequence of the campaign.² Combined operations are addressed when they impact on crisis action planning and operational art.

II. CRISIS ACTION PLANNING, OPERATIONAL ART AND COMBINED OPERATIONS

Crisis Action Planning (CAP)

For the purpose of this paper a crisis is a fast-breaking event that occurs with little or no warning and threatens a vital interest of the United States and (or) its allies. Moreover, a crisis requires rapid decisions that contemplate the employment of U.S. military forces to attain national objectives.³ Relevant military responses to a crisis include ongoing presence, shows of force, demonstrations, special operations, quarantines, blockades, and forced entry operations.⁴

Since 1960 the United States has faced over 200 events throughout the world that fit the definition of a crisis.⁵ In the aftermath of a series of crises in the early '70s the President and the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) determined that the country's military organization for crisis reporting and response was inadequate. Following this conclusion the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) developed new doctrine for crisis action planning and in 1976 the new procedures were instituted. Current doctrine, refined by experience, is embodied in JOPS Volume IV.⁶

As mentioned previously, JOPS Volume IV makes no reference to crisis procedures in combined environments. Furthermore, it ignores the concepts of conflict termination and postconflict operations. These omissions are significant since the final resolution of a crisis may occur after the end of combat operations.

In a crisis leading to a military response the President, National Security Council (NSC), and JCS normally employ a coordinated process to produce a suitable plan to deal with the problem. This process is described in JOPS Volume IV and consists of the following six phases: I. Situation Development; II. Crisis Assessment; III. Course of Action Development; IV. Course of Action Selection; V. Execution Planning; and VI. Execution. These phases facilitate planning as well as the deployment and employment of forces. Since every crisis is unique, the CAP process was designed for flexibility. Phases or portions of phases may be executed sequentially, concurrently or omitted based on the situation and time available.⁷

Situation Development, the first phase of crisis action procedures, begins with the occurrence of an incident that may effect or threaten national security. Every day a myriad of organizations monitor world events and, if any of them detect an event having possible national security

implications, they submit reports to the National Military Command Center (NMCC). Phase I ends when the National Command Authority (NCA),—the President or SECDEF—the Chairman of the JCS (CJCS) and JCS are informed of the event.⁸

After receiving such a report, the NCA and JCS execute Phase II or Crisis Assessment. In this phase the political, economic and military implications of the crisis are evaluated. The NCA determines the national interests at risk, the objectives corresponding to those interests and the political, economic and military options available to achieve those objectives. In the meantime, updated situation reports from the Commander in Chief (CINC) responsible for the crisis area—the crisis occurs within that CINC's Area of Responsibility (AOR)—and national intelligence assets keep the NCA, CJCS and JCS informed of the situation.⁹ Throughout this phase, the CJCS and JCS advise the President on potential military responses and review any existing plans for such an occurrence. The process moves to phase III if, after weighing the options available, the NCA decides that military courses of action should be developed.¹⁰

Course of Action Development or phase III of CAP commences when the CJCS transmits a Warning Order (WARNORD) to the CINC and any supporting CINCs. Ideally, the NCA will provide clearly defined missions and guidance—to include the strategic objectives to be attained—to the supported and supporting CINCs.¹¹ From phase III on, the operational design of the response takes shape. Normally the CINC will be tasked to prepare a Commander's Estimate that includes viable courses of action (COA) and his recommended COA. However, if time is short, the NCA and the JCS may develop their own COA. Phase III ends when the CINC sends his estimate and recommended COA to the CJCS and NCA.¹²

After receiving the CINC's estimate and recommended COA, the CJCS starts phase IV, Course of Action Selection. As the principal military advisor to the NCA, the CJCS evaluates the estimate. This evaluation may result in the creation of entirely new COA, the refinement—or revision—of the CINC's COA or acceptance of his recommendations. Based on the situation and the COA available, the CJCS may issue a Planning Order to speed execution planning; however, this does not constitute a decision. Finally, the CJCS presents the recommended COA to the NCA for a decision. Phase IV is complete when the CJCS issues an Alert Order that identifies the selected COA and authorizes the initiation of Execution Planning.¹³

Once the Alert Order is issued, the Execution Planning Phase begins and the supported commander transforms the selected COA into an Operations Order (OPORD) or Campaign Plan. In this phase the detailed planning required to execute the approved COA is completed. The supported and supporting CINCs identify the forces, sustainment packages, and strategic transportation required. The level of detail will be proportional to the time available for planning. Phase V ends once the required forces are on hand, a viable plan is complete and the CINC is ready to execute his plan.¹⁴

Phase VI or Execution, starts with the NCA decision to employ a military option. The SECDEF authorizes the CJCS to issue an Execute Order that directs the CINC to carry out the OPORD. The CINC then issues an Execute Order to his subordinate and supporting commanders. At this point the CINC is executing his operational plan.¹⁵

In each phase the services, other CINCs and subordinate commanders monitor the situation and—if required to support the responsible CINC—may create crisis action teams, estimates and supporting plans of their own. Most often some supporting CINCs will provide resources and (or) forces of

some type. The United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) plays a key role in situations requiring the movement of large forces. In these situations TRANSCOM will review the CINC's COA, send him deployment estimates for each COA and assist him in refining requirements both before and after a COA has been selected. Furthermore, once in the Execution Planning and Execution phases, TRANSCOM builds transportation schedules and ensures that adequate assets are available to move and sustain forces.¹⁶

Operational Art.

FM 100-5 defines operational art as "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."¹⁷ Setting the conditions for tactical success is not part of the formal definition, but is an important consideration in the design of campaigns and major operations.

Operational art requires the CINC and his staff to link tactical actions to the strategic ends he must attain. He must discern what military conditions will achieve the desired ends. Moreover, he must determine what sequence of actions will create those conditions. Finally, he must decide how he will employ his available military resources to complete the required sequence of actions. This process normally results in the design of a campaign plan.¹⁸ Elements of operational design include center(s) of gravity, sequencing, lines of operations, decisive points, culminating points, branches and sequels.

The Combined Environment.

Joint Publication 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines the combined as containing "two or more forces or agencies of two or more allied nations."¹⁹ When these forces or agencies

act "together for the accomplishment of a single mission" they execute combined operations.²⁰ Combined operations normally occur in the framework of an alliance or coalition. An alliance is created through "formal agreements for broad long term objectives."²¹ The Axis—or Tripartite Pact—of World War II is an example of an alliance. A coalition is less formal than an alliance and often forms as a response to unforeseen crises. FM 100-8 defines a coalition as an "ad hoc agreement for common action."²²

Criteria For Analysis.

Military professionals searching the past for evidence to support or refute theories must take care to avoid the misapplication of history and paradigms. Specifically, they must be weary of drawing tenuous parallels between the past and present. Comparing U.S. doctrine for crisis action planning and operational art with German actions in 1941 is no exception.

America's all volunteer military, while armed better than any force in history, is much smaller than the Wehrmacht of 1941. Today the U.S. military maintains a high state of peacetime preparedness but its state of readiness cannot match that of wartime Germany. Finally, while the Germans faced problems in projecting forces into Yugoslavia, their difficulties pale in comparison to the global requirements for force projection facing America today. These differences have been considered in this analysis.

U.S. doctrines for crisis action planning and operational art, provide criteria for a comparative analysis with German actions in OPERATION 25. Differences in political and military leadership structures will be accounted for by substituting German positions of similar responsibility with their modern U.S. counterparts. Hitler was Germany's NCA. While the commanders of the Luftwaffe (air force), Heeres (army), Kriegsmarine (navy) and the Oberkommando des Wehrmacht (OKW)—Armed Forces High Command—approximate the

JCS. Germany had no positions equal to the CJCS or SECDEF. Figure 1. lists those elements of CAP and operational art employed as criteria for analysis.

<p style="text-align: center;">Figure 1. CRITERIA FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS²³</p> <p>Phase I: Situation Development. Event: An event occurs with possible implications for national security. Action: The event is monitored and recognized. The CINC submits his assessment of the situation. Outcome: The monitoring agency determines that the event may have national security implications and reports it to the NCA/JCS</p>
<p>Phase II: Crisis Assessment. Event: The monitoring agency's report and (or) CINC's assessment are received. Action: The JCS assess the situation and advise the NCA on possible military responses. NCA/CJCS evaluate the situation. Outcome: NCA/JCS decide to develop military COA.</p>
<p>Phase III: Course Of Action Development. Event: CJCS publishes a Warning Order. Action: COA are developed and evaluated. The JCS reviews the CINC's estimate. Subordinate and supporting commands evaluate the situation. USTRANSCOM prepares deployment estimates. Outcome: CINC publishes his estimate with a recommended COA.</p>
<p>Phase IV: Course Of Action Selection. Event: CJCS presents refined and prioritized COAs to the NCA. Action: CJCS continues to advise the NCA, he may issue a Planning Order to start execution planning before the NCA chooses COA. Outcome: NCA selects COA. CJCS publishes selected COA in Alert Order.</p>
<p>Phase V: Execution Planning. Event: CINC receives an Alert or Planning Order. Action: Required tasks are identified and assigned to units. The CINC, subordinate and supporting commands convert the COA into OPORDs and supporting OPORDs. Movement requirements are identified. Shortfalls and limitations are resolved. Outcome: CINC issues his OPORD or Campaign plan.</p>
<p>Phase VI: Execution. Event: NCA decides to execute the OPORD or Campaign plan. Action: CJCS issues Execute Order by authority and direction of the SECDEF. The CINC executes his OPORD or Campaign plan. Outcome: Crisis is resolved. Operational Art: How were military means related to political ends? Were tactics, operations and strategy integrated to achieve political ends? Were centers of gravity identified? Was the campaign logically sequenced? How did the exigencies of Combined Operations affect planning?</p>

III. BACKGROUND OF THE YUGOSLAV CRISIS

Located on the west side of the Balkan peninsula, Yugoslavia was bordered by 1,300 miles of Adriatic coast and 1,850 miles of land frontier with Italy, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania. The country's six major geographic regions included the Pannonian Basin, the Sava and Drava river valleys, the Morava and Vardar river valleys, the Dinaric Alps, the Adriatic coast, and the rugged central plateau.²⁴

The Pannonian Basin possessed most of the nation's industry and Belgrade the Yugoslav capital. Belgrade was Yugoslavia's largest city with 400,000 inhabitants and constituted the political and military heart of the country. Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, possessed 200,000 residents and was the nexus of the most important rail lines in the Balkans. Other major cities included Skoplje in Macedonia, Sarajevo in Bosnia and the Adriatic ports at Split and Dubrovnik. The most important line of communications in Yugoslavia—and the Balkans—followed the Morava-Vardar river line and connected Budapest, Hungary with Salonika, Greece on the Aegean Sea.²⁵

Rugged terrain slowed the growth of Yugoslavia's transportation network. Croatia and Slovenia possessed most of Yugoslavia's few paved roads and its best rail lines. However, most of them followed twisting paths through easily blocked passes. Along the northern border the Drava and Sava rivers constituted obstacles to north-south movement. Similarly, the Tisza, Danube, Morava and Vardar rivers hampered east-west mobility.²⁶

Yugoslavia's climate is similar to central Europe's, characterized by warm, rainy summers and cold winters. The Adriatic coast, however, has a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry, summers and mild wet winters.²⁷

After the First World War peace makers tried to revise national boundaries in the Balkans according to the principle of national self-

determination. Despite good intentions, it was impossible to reach a settlement acceptable to all. Yugoslavia was a prime example of the problem. The "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" was created in 1919 by fusing parts of the defunct Habsburg Empire—Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina—with Serbia, Montenegro and northern Macedonia.²⁸

In the new Kingdom the Serbs tended to exploit the rest. Of 16 million inhabitants, Serbs constituted 45% of the population, the Croats represented about 35% and the Slovenes 11%. The last 9% consisted of Albanians, Bulgars, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Hungarians, and Germans. In 1919 the Kingdom was founded on the principle of equal status for the nation's three Slavic minorities. Serbs, however, dominated the government from 1919 to 1941. The non-Serbian minorities bitterly resented their second class status and longed for the independence of their own regions.²⁹

Religious differences exacerbated the country's problems. Yugoslavia's religions divided the populace into three groups that transcended provincial boundaries. The first included the Serbs, Macedonians and Montenegrins who embraced the Eastern Orthodox religion. The second group was predominantly Roman Catholic and consisted of the Croats and Slovenes. Juxtaposed between these two were the Islamic or "Muslim-Slavs" of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁰

Between 1919 and 1929 the fledgling state avoided the forces of dissolution with a weak central government holding loose control over the country. In 1929 Prince Regent Alexander took the reins of power, changed the kingdom's name to Yugoslavia (Land of the South Slavs) and created the country's first constitution. King Alexander worked progressively toward a united Yugoslavia where all peoples would receive equality. However, in 1934 during a visit to France, Croatian radicals assassinated the King.³¹

After Alexander, the legal sovereign was Peter II, but at 10 years of age

he could not legally take his throne. For that privilege he would have to wait until his 18th birthday in November 1941. In the meantime leadership rested in the hands of the Regent Prince Paul. Paul sympathized with the Allies but he faced opposition in the form of intellectuals who leaned toward Marxism and members of the military leadership who favored the Axis.³²

In 1940 Paul's cabinet—in order of importance—consisted of Dr. Vladko Macek, a Croat and the Deputy Premier; Dragisa Cvetkovic the Prime Minister and Aleksander Cincar-Markovic the Foreign Minister. Macek, while dedicated to the Croatian cause, was a peaceful and devoted Catholic. Cvetkovic, a Serb who contributed little to the government, held his position because he was willing to work with the Croats. Finally, there was Cincar-Markovic, a Serb and career diplomat who served in Berlin when Hitler rose to power.³³

Internally, Yugoslavia was wracked by bitter ethnic feuds. In August of 1939, Macek's Croat Peasant Party demanded greater autonomy for Croatia. They received some concessions but their success angered the Serbs who felt their dominance slipping away. Meanwhile, in Rome, a Croatian extremist named Ante Pavelic—leader of the radical "Ustasa Movement"—courted Mussolini's support for an independent Croatia. With Italian patronage the Croats were a powerful threat to the stability of Yugoslavia.³⁴

Internal dissent and rugged terrain were not the only problems facing Yugoslavia. As one of the countries created after World War I, Yugoslavia was surrounded by neighbors desiring the recovery of lost territory. The Hungarians longed to recover territory lost to Yugoslavia (Banat) and Rumania (Transylvania). Similarly, Bulgaria eyed the Yugoslavian province of Macedonia and the Rumanian province of Dobruja. Besides Hungary and Bulgaria, Yugoslavia had to contend with Mussolini, who had designs on the Dalmatian coast. Meanwhile, Russia, a traditional friend to Serbia, longed

to absorb the Rumanian provinces of Bessarabia and Bukovina. In the '30s the Balkans were as volatile as they were in the period before World War I.³⁵

Yugoslavia's national strategy in the interwar period hinged upon maintaining the country's integrity while attacking its internal problems. In 1924—to deter Hungarian expansion—the Yugoslavs joined the Czechs and Rumanians to form the Little Entente. The Entente nations—sponsored by France—participated in annual military conferences from 1929 to 1937. Later, the Balkan Entente of 1934—designed to maintain the status quo—brought Yugoslavia, Greece, Rumania and Turkey together. Most of these countries accepted French military missions, adopted the French military system and purchased French equipment. Yugoslavia benefited from these alliances until the late '30s. Then, faced by a resurgent Germany and a hostile Italy, the Yugoslavs attempted to remain neutral.³⁶

To gain favor with an increasingly powerful Germany, many Balkan nations opted for increased commerce with the Reich. Rumania traded oil for cannon. Similarly, Yugoslavia, traded metals for frontline aircraft and artillery pieces. By the summer of 1939, Germany was the dominant trading partner with most of the Balkan states and received most of the resources it needed from them. Hitler's interests in the region included its peace and stability.³⁷

The Russo-German non-aggression pact of 1939 and the swift German conquests in Scandinavia, the Low Countries and France brought some Balkan nations closer to Hitler. Yugoslavia, however, tried to remain neutral by seeking a precarious balance between her Balkan neighbors, Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union.³⁸

By the fall of 1940 Hitler controlled Europe from the Vistula River to the Pyrenees Mountains. Despite the defeat in the Battle of Britain and the postponement of OPERATION SEA LION, the future appeared bright for the Reich.

ominously, before the Luftwaffe's check at the hands of the Royal Air Force, the Führer's attention was turning to the East. On 31 July 1940 he gave the army guidance for OPERATION BARBAROSSA: the invasion of Russia.³⁹

Germany's overall strategy for 1941 revolved around the destruction of the Soviet Union and peripheral attacks in the Mediterranean to force England out of the region. The Mediterranean portion of this strategy, while clearly playing second fiddle to BARBAROSSA, involved the seizure of Gibraltar and combined operations with the Italians in North Africa. The ongoing battle of the Atlantic and the limited air war over England were supporting efforts in the overall strategy. Following Russia's defeat, the Wehrmacht could focus on eliminating England from the war. Events in the Balkans, however, combined to distract Hitler from the consummation of his plans for Russia.⁴⁰

Between June and September of 1940 Russia, Hungary and Bulgaria issued demands for the return of territories lost to Rumania after WWI. Hitler intervened and Rumania suffered. Russia won Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, Hungary recovered Transylvania and Bulgaria absorbed southern Dobruja. In September, a Fascist coup toppled Rumania's King Carol II and established a dictatorship that joined the Axis. Rumania's fate provided an abject lesson to Yugoslavia: Hitler was the new arbiter of the Balkans.⁴¹

On 28 October 1940—without advising Germany—Italy invaded Greece. After six days of fighting and minor Italian gains, the Greeks launched a counteroffensive. They drove the Italians out of Greece and by January 1941 they had penetrated 50 miles into Albania. By November 1940 the British had established their presence in the Balkans by providing naval, air and logistics support to the Greeks. In December the frustrated Italians formally requested German intervention.⁴²

Having decided to invade Russia, Hitler could not tolerate hostile forces

threatening his flank in the Balkans. Furthermore, British airpower based in Greece could range the Rumanian oil fields at Ploesti, a major source of petroleum for Germany. Consequently, on 13 December Hitler issued Directive 20 for OPERATION MARITA: the invasion of Greece. The plan for the seizure of Gibraltar was cancelled and Hitler's peripheral strategy was sidetracked.⁴³

To execute MARITA the Wehrmacht's first task was to get an invasion force to the Greek border. While the most direct route ran through Yugoslavia, an alternative existed from Hungary through Rumania to Bulgaria. However, if the Germans deployed on the second route, Yugoslavia still posed a problem. With an army of one million men, the Yugoslavs were no small threat to German lines of communication. Russian intervention could exacerbate the problem. Hitler needed a non-aggression pact with Yugoslavia, if not an alliance.⁴⁴

Fearful of Russian expansion, Rumania accepted German troops to guard her oilfields. The Hungarians—who joined the Tripartite Pact on 20 November in gratitude for Hitler's help in regaining Transylvania—cooperated by granting transit rights to German forces on the way to Rumania. Ironically, one month later they signed a "Pact of Constant Peace and Eternal Friendship with Yugoslavia." In return for Hitler's assistance in recovering southern Dobruja, King Boris of Bulgaria agreed to Germany's covert use of his country as a staging area for MARITA. The King, however, stayed out of the Axis, until 1 March 1941, to avoid provoking the Russians or Turks.⁴⁵

Hitler now had the freedom to execute the minimum operational movements required for MARITA, but Yugoslavia was still a problem and the Wehrmacht pressed for the easier route. Yugoslavian cooperation could then save six to ten weeks in the deployments for MARITA and the redeployments for BARBAROSSA.⁴⁶

Accordingly, the Führer applied diplomatic pressure on the Yugoslav government. In a meeting with Cincar-Markovic at Berchtesgaden on 27

November, Hitler offered Yugoslavia the Greek port of Salonika and a guarantee of her frontiers in return for signing the Tripartite Pact. Cincar-Markovic was noncommittal. With its intelligence service predicting a German attack on Russia, the Yugoslavian government held out in the hope that a campaign in Russia would distract Germany. Meanwhile, they courted aid from Britain and America, but all they received was verbal encouragement.⁴⁷

By February 1941 Hitler's patience was wearing thin while the Wehrmacht was clamoring about the difficulties that Yugoslav neutrality imposed on OPERATION MARITA. On the 14th, Hitler again received Cincar-Markovic, who continued to stall. In early March, Prince Paul met with Hitler at Berchtesgaden as the German XII Army massed in Bulgaria. The dictator explained that if Yugoslavia refused to cooperate, he would do nothing to save them from Italian and Bulgarian expansion following MARITA. Paul refused to agree to German demands. The prince, however, returned home convinced that Yugoslavia would be crushed if it did not join the Axis. Despite his feelings, Paul hesitated and considered resisting Hitler. The Yugoslavs hurriedly dispatched liaison officers to meet with the British and Greeks. They sought British assurances of direct intervention with ground and air forces, but the Yugoslavs left empty handed. The British, however, advised them to invade Albania to capture Italian equipment. Bravely, the Yugoslavs began moving their Third Army toward the Albanian border to have the option available at short notice.⁴⁸

Hitler could endure no further delay and on the 22nd he gave the Yugoslavs one last chance to sign the pact. As rumors of Yugoslavia's joining the Axis spread, pressure mounted inside the country for defiance in the face of the dictator's ultimatum. Over the next few days the Yugoslavian Royal Council debated their options. While some advocated resistance, the

majority agreed that for Yugoslavia's survival they must accept Hitler's demands. On 25 March, Cevtkovic and Cincar-Markovic signed the Tripartite Pact on behalf of Yugoslavia. However, they signed with the stipulation that no foreign troops would be allowed to transit through Yugoslavia.⁴⁹

The Crisis

Hitler's partial diplomatic success was short-lived. On the day after the pact was signed General Bora Mirkovic, a patriotic Serbian and Deputy Commander of the Yugoslav Air Force, hatched a conspiracy to overthrow the government. Mirkovic had contemplated such a coup since 1937 and Paul's latest move provided a spark for action. Gathering support from his fellow officers and with the tacit support of the General Simovic—the Air Force Commander in Chief—he rapidly planned to seize control of Belgrade. Mirkovic would lead the forces involved and Simovic would head the new government.⁵⁰

At 0220 hours on the 27th, Mirkovic's hastily assembled forces supported by tanks and artillery seized key locations in Belgrade. With the city effectively cut off from the rest of the country, General Simovic presented his demands to the government. Cvetkovic resigned while Paul renounced his powers and fled to exile in Greece. A radio proclamation at dawn announced the overthrow of the prince and throughout the 27th, Belgrade rejoiced in a sea of anti-German demonstrations. On the 28th the rebels installed the youthful Peter as King. Simovic would act as Prime Minister while Vladko Macek was persuaded to stay on as Deputy Premier. For a brief moment Serbians, advocates of the Yugoslavian idea, and communists were united in the belief that history had been made.⁵¹

The Military Balance

In the '30s and '40s Yugoslavia's military leadership often overshadowed

the country's politicians. Serbs dominated the force: 163 of the 165 Yugoslav generals were Serbians. Most of the military leadership had been bloodied in the First World War, where they fought with great bravery and endurance. They were a proud group steeped in the rich lore of their military heritage. However, they were slaved to tradition and slow to accept new trends in warfare. While Yugoslav generals presided over wargames and maneuvers that refought the battles of the past war, Germany was overrunning most of Europe. The Yugoslavs largely ignored the lessons provided by the Wehrmacht's demonstrations of modern warfare. Furthermore, the modest modernization programs that they started proceeded at a snail's pace.⁵²

In 1940 the head of Yugoslavia's armed forces was General Milan Nedic the Minister of War. Nedic leaned toward the Axis and when Italy invaded Greece, he advocated an attack to seize the Greek port of Salonika. Paul overruled Nedic and replaced him with a 73 year old General named Petar Pesic. Paul chose him because he was easier to control. Pesic, however, was not up to the responsibilities of his post and his appointment angered the country's military leadership.⁵³

The Yugoslav military in 1941 was unprepared for a German invasion. At full mobilization the Army could muster 1,000,000 trained men in 35 divisions, an assortment of independent brigades and 23 frontier guard battalions. When the Wehrmacht attacked, 700,000 men in 28 infantry and three cavalry divisions were in the field. However, only the regular army divisions of the Third and Fourth Armies reached full mobilization.⁵⁴

Individually the Yugoslavian soldier was a well trained and worthy opponent. Special units called "Cetnici,"—trained in guerrilla operations of up to battalion size—deployed near the border to harass the rear the invaders at the onset of war. These troops, however, would not prove their

value until after Yugoslavia capitulated.⁵⁵

Many of Yugoslavia's 6,700 artillery pieces and all of its 200 tanks were of foreign design and obsolete. Furthermore, the Army lacked mobility because motor transportation was scarce. Finally, the Yugoslav's failed to practice large unit maneuvers that integrated air, artillery and tank forces.⁵⁶

The Yugoslav Air Force possessed 505 aircraft, 300 of which were modern designs. The total included 73 Messerschmitt Bf-109s and 70 Dornier Do-17s bought from Germany. Unfortunately for Yugoslavia, training was poor and most of the country's airfields were inadequate for combat operations.⁵⁷

The Yugoslav Navy was a relatively modern force stationed in the Adriatic ports of Sibenik and Kotor. However, with only four modern destroyers, 18 torpedo boats and four submarines, Yugoslavia's maritime service was in no position to affect the coming campaign.⁵⁸

Terrain limited the options open to the Yugoslav Army. Against one front, the Yugoslavs could exploit their tough terrain in the defense and protect the nation's vital areas. However, if faced with multiple threats on the country's long borders, the weak transportation net negated the advantage of interior lines of operation. In this case falling back to the central and southern parts of the country or linking up with the British and Greeks to the south could prolong the fight and provide the opportunity for an allied counteroffensive. This concept was embodied in War Plans S of 1938 and R-40 of 1940.⁵⁹

Had they adopted Plan S or R-40 the Yugoslavs could have severely mauled the invaders in terrain inhospitable to panzers. Instead they developed a new war plan--R-41, issued on 31 March 1941--that called for the defense of every crossing along the frontier and an invasion of Albania by the Third

Army. Perhaps there was little choice as the first two war plans required the early abandonment of the country's most vital areas. In March 1941 the army spread out in a cordon defense along 1,859 miles of land frontier. The Yugoslavs planned to form a strategic reserve, however, they never created it. Defensive positions in depth were neglected and individual frontier fortifications, while skillfully located, lacked integration and heavy artillery. In April 1941 the Wehrmacht identified and exploited the weaknesses of Plan R-41.⁶⁰

At the outset of the invasion the Yugoslavian Army deployed three army groups, an independent army and the Coastal Defense Command. Air support for each army group was supplied by an air brigade while naval aircraft flew in support of the Coastal Command. The First Army Group deployed with the Seventh Army on the left and Fourth Army on the right. They would defend the northern border from the Adriatic to Slatina on the Hungarian frontier. Next came the Second Army Group composed of the Second and First Armies. The Second Army deployed on the Hungarian border while the First Army defended the Banat region opposite the Hungarian and Rumanian borders. The Sixth Army—an independent command—was positioned in the Banat to the northeast of Belgrade along the Rumanian frontier. In the south the Third Army Group was responsible for the defense of Macedonia and the invasion of Albania. To accomplish these missions, Third Army marched to the Albanian frontier while the Fifth and Third Territorial Armies defended opposite the Rumanian and Bulgarian borders. Finally, the Coastal Defense Command guarded the Adriatic coast, Sebinek and Kotor with an infantry division and two fortress brigades. Simovic took overall command and set up his headquarters in Belgrade.⁶¹

In the spring of 1941 the German military machine was a large and powerful force. Seasoned in the successful campaigns of 1939 and 1940, the

Wehrmacht was experienced, confident and highly proficient in the art of war. Since it was still in a state of war with England, the German military was in a high state of readiness. By March 1941, the German Army possessed 190 divisions: 51 of which were stationed in Germany; 56 in France, Holland and Belgium; 30 deployed along the Russian border; 17 in Bulgaria and Rumania; 10 in Norway and Denmark; and one in Africa. With the exception of the Twelfth Army staging in Bulgaria all of Germany's divisions were employed in occupation duties or were earmarked for BARBAROSSA.⁶²

The German Army of 1941 possessed a well-oiled tactical technique commonly known today as blitzkrieg. This technique permeated the air armored, mechanized and motorized portions of the force. In blitzkreig tanks and air power provided mass, speed, and force to the attack. Initiative, manifested in choosing the time, place and conditions for the attack as well as the ability to exploit opportunities, was an essential ingredient in the German tactics. Essentially, blitzkrieg was a form of tactical maneuver designed to create a breakthrough in enemy defenses to facilitate envelopments. These envelopments allowed the Germans to encircle and destroy enemy forces. Once they dismembered the enemy army the vital portions of the opponent's nation were defenseless to German attacks. A variant of this approach—advocated by Germany's armor proponents—relied more on the shock and paralysis of deep thrusts rather than encirclement battles. By striking deep and fast into the enemy's vital areas and disrupting their command and control capability this version left the enemy unable to react.⁶³

Despite its defeat in the Battle of Britain, the Luftwaffe of March 1941 was the most powerful air force in the world. On the verge of the coup in Belgrade, the Luftwaffe possessed over 4,000 frontline aircraft, 490 of which were deployed or enroute to Bulgaria and Rumania for MARITA. Seasoned pilots

and leaders—well versed in blitzkrieg—filled the Luftwaffe's ranks.⁶⁴

While blitzkrieg was a well-practiced technique by the spring of 1941, the Germans never codified it in written doctrine. Similarly, while some of the Wehrmacht's campaigns manifest the characteristics of operational art, the essence of the concept was absent from their doctrinal literature. Finally, like blitzkrieg and operational art, no mention of crisis action procedures—or some equivalent—can be found in their doctrine.⁶⁵

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE GERMAN INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA

Situation Development and Crisis Assessment

Within hours of the coup in Yugoslavia—between 1000 and 1100 hours on 27 March—German diplomatic sources in Belgrade reported the event to Hitler in Berlin. When the dictator learned of the coup he thought the news was a joke. Any joviality was short-lived and the Führer quickly decided that Yugoslavia was unreliable and would inevitably join the allies. Despite messages of reassurance from Yugoslavia—that the new government would stand by its treaty obligations—Hitler was unmoved.⁶⁶

At 1200 hours Hitler summoned the Army and Luftwaffe commanders in chief and their chiefs of staff to his headquarters. From the OKW he called for Generals Keitel (Chief of the OKW) and Jodl (Chief of the OKW Operations Staff).⁶⁷ Joachim Ribbentrop, the Foreign Minister, received the order to attend as well. At 1300 hours Hitler convened a joint planning session regarding the Yugoslav crisis and informed those attending that he had decided to "destroy Yugoslavia as a military power and sovereign state."⁶⁸ He emphasized the importance of speed and that Italy, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria would participate with Germany in a combined campaign. By 1430 hours, Hitler and his military leaders had developed planning guidance for the invasion. This guidance was included in DIRECTIVE 25—subsequently

referred to as OPERATION 25—ordering the invasion and was issued to the services that evening. The Army and Luftwaffe recieved orders to submit detailed plans as soon as possible.⁶⁹

Hitler's guidance called for a phased operation distributed between two major lines of operation originating in Bulgaria and Austria. Initially, the Luftwaffe would attack Belgrade, and seize control of the air. In subsequent phases it would support the ground forces. The second phase was a ground invasion by forces assembling in Bulgaria. This force would attack in two directions. The northern wing would attack on the Sofia-Nis-Belgrade axis while the southern element would attack from the vicinity of Sofia into southern Yugoslavia and then join the attack on Greece. Together these attacks would secure the vital line of communications between Belgrade and Salonika. Limited objective attacks to seize key terrain features would coincide with the initial air strikes on Belgrade. From Austria an attack to the southeast would be launched as soon as sufficient forces were assembled. Meanwhile, German agents would contact Croatian dissidents and support them in an attempt to break away from the Yugoslav state. If possible, OPERATION MARITA would be launched simultaneously with the airstrikes on Belgrade.⁷⁰

On the same day, Hitler discussed the operation with the Hungarian, Rumanian and Bulgarian ministers, and requested support from their governments. For active participation Hitler offered Hungary the Banat region and to Bulgaria he promised Macedonia. Both countries balked but the Hungarians agreed to allow a German corps to assemble in their country for the invasion. Meanwhile, the Rumanians sealed the Yugoslav border and prepared to defend against Soviet intervention. To Mussolini, Hitler sent a memorandum outlining what the Germans needed in terms of support. This

message virtually dictated a course of action for the Italians. Their missions were to guard the flank of the German attack from Austria with a thrust down the Dalmation coast to the port of Split and the neutralization of the Yugoslav Fleet. In addition, they would defend in Albania until ordered to attack east and meet the German thrust to Skoplje. Mussolini approved the plan and ordered his military to prepare for its execution.⁷¹

The initial German reaction to the coup bears close resemblance to current U.S. crisis action procedures. The Wehrmacht's response started with a report from diplomatic sources in Belgrade who quickly decided the event had national security implications for the Reich. As Germany's NCA, Hitler quickly assessed the situation. With the start dates of MARITA and BARBAROSSA fast approaching he had to solve the problem quickly. In his view Germany faced a crisis that required a military course of action.

Whether the coup constituted a threat to Germany's national security or if there were viable non-military means to resolve the problem are debatable. Furthermore, there is little indication that Hitler sought the advice of his political or military advisors prior to deciding on a military option. Nonetheless, Hitler as the NCA decided that Yugoslavia was a threat that had to be eliminated by force of arms.

The leaders present in Hitler's Chancellery on 27 March 1941 were roughly equivalent to the JCS and together they produced a COA. U.S. doctrine provides for similar flexibility in particularly time-sensitive situations. The NCA and the Joint Chiefs may produce a COA if they feel the situation will not allow enough time for the supported CINC to produce his own estimate. Given the fact that MARITA was scheduled to start in early April and with BARBAROSSA slated for mid-May, reaction time was in short supply.

Since only one COA was developed, by issuing Directive 25, Hitler had

essentially given each of his services an Alert Order to start detailed planning. Like current U.S. doctrine the German process was flexible and actions similar to the Situation Development and Crisis Assessment phases ran concurrent to the Course of Action Development phase. For the purposes of this analysis the German Situation Development and Crisis Assessment phases were similar to those that might be employed by the United States military. The Germans acted as if they were following U.S. procedures for a NCA/JCS developed COA. Since all of Germany's key military leaders were present when the COA was developed,—during the equivalent of the Situation Development and Crisis Assessment phases—a WARNORD was not required.

Of interest is the fact that on the same day Hitler contacted the Rumanian and Bulgarian foreign ministers to inform them of his intent. Later, he drafted and transmitted a message to Mussolini dictating a course of action for the Italian army. The important point here is that Hitler grasped the important role that combined operations would play in the invasion and that he immediately moved to marshal his allies' cooperation.

Course of Action Development, Selection and Execution Planning

The German Army High Command (OKH) worked feverishly throughout the night of 27-28 March to create an outline plan that was incorporated in Directive 25. This effort expanded the guidance already received from Hitler.⁷² At 1230 hours on the 28th General Franz Halder—Chief of the Army General Staff (OKH)—briefed the dictator on the outline plan.⁷³

The entire Balkan theater would be commanded by Field Marshall Walter von Brauchitsch—the Commander in Chief of the Army—from a command post at Wiener-Neustadt, Austria. Without a declaration of war, the Luftwaffe would initiate the attack on 1 April, followed by a the ground offensive between the 8th and the 15th. Meanwhile, MARITA was rescheduled for the 2nd or 3rd.

From Austria and Hungary, General Maximillian von Weich's Second Army would crush resistance in Croatia and then drive southeast between the Sava and Drava rivers toward Belgrade. General Ewald von Kleist's First Panzer Group would assemble near Sofia, drive north up the Morava river valley and seize Belgrade. Both of these thrusts would link up in the vicinity of Belgrade and preempt any attempt by the Yugoslav's to fall back on the interior. The toughest assignment went to the southern-most force, Field Marshall Wilhelm von List's Twelfth Army which had already assembled in southwest Bulgaria for MARITA. Von List would strike into Macedonia with his right wing, heading first for Skoplje and then into northern Greece, in effect cutting Yugoslavia off from the British and Greeks. Meanwhile, the Army's center would thrust into southern Macedonia and then move south to outflank the Greek fortifications on the Metaxas Line. Simultaneously, the left wing of the Twelfth Army would invade eastern Greece.⁷⁴

On 29 March General Friedrich von Paulus—the OKH Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations—presided over a conference of army commanders and staffs participating in OPERATION 25. Collectively they assigned corps headquarters' to the armies, allocated forces and adjusted the proposed timing of the plan. The Luftwaffe and Twelfth Army would attack simultaneously on 6 April. Von Kleist's was scheduled to attack on the 8th. Von List would attack last, on the 12th, because of the time required to mass his forces in Hungary and Austria. The Italians would not be ready until the 22nd, but Hungary now agreed to commit a small corps under OKH control. Halder sent von Paulus to Budapest the same day to work out the details.⁷⁵

In addition to von Paulus' trip to Hungary, the Wehrmacht's liaison officers and their counterparts from Italy, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria rapidly coordinated the actions of their countries. Major General Erich von

Rentelen was instrumental in synchronizing Italy's participation. Meanwhile von List worked closely with the Rumanians and Bulgarians. These men and others were vital in setting the conditions for the Wehrmacht's success.⁷⁶

Hitler approved detailed plans for the invasion when he received Halder on the afternoon of 30 March. Operating on exterior lines, the Axis front stretched over 1,000 miles from the Adriatic to southwest Bulgaria. In final form, the plan called for distributed maneuver along five lines of operation. The XL Panzer Corps would form von List's main effort toward Skoplje on 6 April. Simultaneously, the XVIII Mountain Corps would attack from Petrich to Strumica and the lower Vardar with five divisions. Two days later (8 April) von Kleist's First Panzer Group would strike toward Nis and eventually Belgrade with the XIV Panzer and XI Corps. On 12 April, von Weich's Second Army would attack from Austria, Hungary and Rumania into Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. In the west, his XLIX Mountain Corps would cross the Drava and advance to Ljubljana and Zagreb. In the center, the LI Corps would cross the Mura and Drava rivers near Maribor and proceed to Zagreb. From Hungary, the XLVI Panzer Corps would strike from Barcs to Belgrade and Zagreb. Meanwhile, General Reinhardt's XLI Panzer Corps would head southwest from the Rumanian city of Temesvar and join the attack on Belgrade.⁷⁷

General Alexander L hr took command of all Luftwaffe forces in the Balkans. He was tasked to destroy the Yugoslavian command and control apparatus in Belgrade, seize control of the air and support German ground forces. Besides attacks on Yugoslav airfields his primary target on 6 April was Belgrade. This operation entitled "Bestrafung" (Punishment) was a 48 hour airblitz on the Yugoslav Capital. To accomplish these missions, L hr received General von Richtofen's Fliegerkorps VIII (Flying Corps 8) already

stationed in Bulgaria with 414 aircraft. In addition, he could call for support from 168 aircraft of Fliegerkorps X based in Sicily. However, after conducting his estimate, L hr determined that his mission required additional warplanes. Accordingly, the Luftwaffe assembled another 576 aircraft-- from Germany, France and Africa--to create Luftflotte IV (Airfleet 4). Since Fliegerkorps VIII was more familiar with the region, L hr tasked von Richtofen to control the operation. Meanwhile, the Italian Regia Aeronautica (Royal Airforce) massed 666 aircraft for their operations.⁷⁸

While the Germans and their allies raced ahead with plans for war, the Yugoslavs tried in vain to forestall the inevitable. In a futile attempt to stave off the invasion they sent a number of messages to Hitler designed to reassure the dictator they would honor the Tripartite Pact. Their messages, however, fell on deaf ears. Given the circumstances, Simovic ordered the Yugoslav Army to mobilize on 29 March. The Croats formally joined Simovic's government on 3 April. The same day a Yugoslav delegation arrived in Moscow hoping to seal a mutual assistance pact. However, all they could wrangle from their Slavic brothers was a treaty of friendship and non-aggression that was signed on the 5th. Any hopes of deterring Hitler were fading fast. In the meantime, Macek was in contact with German agents hoping to secure special considerations for Croatia.⁷⁹

Aided by Luftwaffe reconnaissance flights, Colonel Kinzel of OKH intelligence accurately templated the Yugoslav deployments. Furthermore, on 3 April, a defecting Croation Air Force officer supplied the Germans with the locations of Yugoslavia's primary and alternate airbases. Kinzel believed that the lack of a strategic reserve would prevent the Yugoslavs from stopping a breakthrough and he predicted a swift enemy collapse if the army breached the border defenses. Once German forces penetrated the initial

defenses he believed the panzers would swiftly drive through the country. On the Albanian front he predicted a Yugoslav advance and problems for the Italians. As the invasion drew near Kinzel reported that the Yugoslavs had strengthened their force south of Nis. This indicated that the enemy may have divined the location of the Twelfth Army's attack; however, no adjustments were made to the German plan.⁸⁰

Developing a plan in a short period of time is a far easier task than assembling the required means to execute it. For OPERATION 25 the assembly of forces turned out to be the greatest challenge faced by the Germans. At the start of the crisis the Twelfth Army was already marshalling in southwest Bulgaria and without difficulty repositioned forces for the new mission. However, because the transportation network in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria was already stretched thin, von List could expect no reinforcements beyond a larger staff for von Kleist's panzer group. Meanwhile, ad hoc motor transport units from forces in Rumania assisted in the redeployments.⁸¹

To mass enough combat power for the Second Army, the Germans gathered nine divisions and five corps headquarters from France, Germany and forces moving to assembly areas—for BARBAROSSA—in Poland. The headquarters of the Second Army self-deployed. However, a complex combination of road, rail and water moves had to be executed—under emergency conditions—to assemble the rest of the Second Army. Throughout these operational movements the Germans were hampered by the Alps, poor roads, the lack of airlift capability and the limited rail capacity of Austria, Hungary and Rumania. In Austria the German Chief of Transportation instituted a "maximum acceleration schedule" that effectively cancelled all non-military traffic. German transportation control centers were set up in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria while German locomotives and rolling stock were sent to augment the rail systems of her

allies. These moves and the superlative cooperation of the Hungarian Transportation Chief alleviated many problems. By 5 April most of Second Army's lead elements were in position and ready to execute limited attacks into Yugoslavia. By the 9th they had enough combat power to attack in strength.⁸² Since German logisticians started planning on the night of the 27th, these deployments in 15 days, constitute an impressive achievement.

Supplying the invasion force was another problem requiring a number of improvisations. First, the Germans reinforced their forces in Rumania with heavy truck companies. Meanwhile, they assembled a flotilla of supply barges for use on the Danube. Similarly, in Constanta Bulgaria, they loaded four freighters and readied them for a link-up with advancing forces in Greece. Finally, they diverted a stockpile of emergency supplies—collected in Vienna for OPERATION BARBAROSSA—to sustain the Second Army.⁸³

For the purposes of this analysis the German planning process closely resembled the Course of Action Development, Course of Action Selection and Execution Planning phases of U.S. CAP. As mentioned previously, Hitler rapidly decided on a military response, and developed a COA with his generals. These actions obviated the need to issue Warning or Alert orders. After Hitler's decision the German Army and Air Force High Commands reacted swiftly and moved to Course of Action Development and Execution Planning.

Halder and his staff took the lead in refining Directive 25 and produced an outline plan overnight. When Halder briefed Hitler on the outline plan (28 March) and later when he delivered the final campaign plan (30 March), the OKH Chief of Staff was performing a role similar to that of the CJCS. In this case, Halder presented his NCA with a refined COA. Since the OKH, led by von Brauchitsch, would command the operation, Halder briefed the the CINC's campaign plan as well. If Keitel, the Chief of the OKW had

briefed Hitler, the similarity to U.S. doctrine would be greater. While on paper the functions of OKW appear to have been roughly equivalent to those of our JCS, the OKW never held a position of similar importance nor did it have an equivalent to the CJCS. Nonetheless, Hitler approved the plans. Once they issued the plan and assembled the allocated forces, an Execute Order could start the campaign.

On the 29th, General von Paulus briefed General von Brauchitsch (CINC) and the commanders of the major units participating in the operation. With the operational commanders present they resolved the timing, force allocation and command structure for the invasion as part of Execution Planning. Moreover, they identified the required tasks and assigned them to the subordinate commands. Simultaneously, the German Chief of Transportation and his staff executed parallel planning to move and sustain the allocated ground and air forces. Like USTRANSCOM, they identified movement requirements, shortfalls and limitations. Furthermore, through a series of improvisations, they developed plans and provided resources to resolve transportation and support problems.

Von Paulus' trip to Budapest on the 29th demonstrated the importance that the German high command placed on combined operations. Similarly the Chief of Transportation coordinated his efforts with Germany's Rumanian and Hungarian allies.

With the German Army taking the lead in planning, Luftflotte IV fell into the role of a subordinate command. After conducting his own estimate L  hr quickly decided that reinforcements were necessary and received them from the Luftwaffe, a supporting command. Meanwhile, Richtofen and the staff of Fliegerkorps VIII initiated parallel planning to build Luftflotte IV's supporting plan for air operations in the campaign.

Execution

On 3 April Hitler issued the Execute Order: OPERATION 25 would start on the 6th.⁸⁴ The invasion began in the usual Wehrmacht fashion. At 0700 hours on 6 April 1941, 234 German bombers escorted by 120 fighters attacked Belgrade. To protect their capital, the Yugoslavs scrambled 20 Bf-109s, 18 Hurricanes and 6 IK-3s. As Stukas hit the Royal Palace, War Ministry, rail station and the major airbase at Zemun with deadly precision, Yugoslav interceptors tangled with German fighters. Unfortunately for the defenders, some of the Hurricane pilots engaged friendly Bf-109s as well as the Luftwaffe's. The first strikes resulted in the destruction of 50 Yugoslav warplanes. Three additional waves, each consisting of approximately 100 aircraft, hit the capital on the 6th. The German air-strikes continued throughout the 7th. Bad weather curtailed operations on the 8th but not before the Luftwaffe killed 17,000 people of Belgrade and rubble the center of the city. Against overwhelming odds the Yugoslavs put up a spirited fight and downed 40 German aircraft in the two day air battle.⁸⁵

The Luftwaffe's attacks on Belgrade and key facilities throughout the country achieved their objectives. They severely disrupted the nerve center of the Yugoslav Army, destroyed over 60% of their air force, and won air superiority. Despite the beating, the Yugoslav Air Force managed to mount limited strikes on advancing German columns and targets in Hungary and Bulgaria. The Yugoslav High Command was in fact paralyzed by the shock and ferocity of the German air-strikes. Simovic reacted by moving his government to Uzice in the Serbian hills, while the Army High Command moved to Sarajevo. These displacements further disrupted their ability to control events.⁸⁶

As the Luftwaffe ravaged the country, von Weichs launched small elements

of the Second Army into Croatia and Slovenia to seize key bridges and mountain passes. Some of these forces were special assault troops—code named Feuerzauber (Magicfire)—that infiltrated Yugoslavia in the first days of April. Against negligible opposition detachments of the XLVI Panzer Corps seized key bridges over the Drava river at Letenye, Zakany, and Barcs. In similar operations the LI Corps captured the Mura and Drava river bridges at Maribor, Murek-Radkersburg and Mursko Sredisce. Together these operations had taken key terrain while gaining vital information for OKH: the Fourth Yugoslavian Army—composed mainly of Croats—lacked the will to resist.⁸⁷

In contrast to von Weich's limited objective attacks, von List attacked in force. At 0530 hours on the 6th the XL Panzer Corps charged across the border on two axes. Both prongs of the attack met determined resistance in difficult terrain and spent most of day overcoming the defenders. However, by evening they penetrated to Kumanovo and had seized Kocane. At this point the Yugoslavian Third Territorial Army was crumbling and on 7 April Skoplje fell while German infantry crossed the Vardar River at Veles. On the 8th, the 9th Panzer Division of the XL Panzer Corps pivoted south and raced into Prilep. The next day they took Monastir while reconnaissance elements made contact with the Italians in Albania.⁸⁸

To the south of the XL Panzer Corps, the XVIII Mountain Corps employed the 2nd Panzer Division in a drive on Strumica. Meeting weak resistance the biggest impediment to the division consisted of mud and minefields. Strumica fell on the afternoon of the 6th. The 2nd Panzer defeated a counterattack against its north wing on the 7th and proceeded south into Greece. Von List had accomplished his initial objectives: isolating Yugoslavia from the Allies in Greece and turning the Metaxas line.⁸⁹

When von Kleist's XIV Panzer Corps crossed the frontier on 8 April, the

Yugoslav High Command was unable to coordinate the actions of its armies. Spearheaded by the 11th Panzer Division—with the 5th Panzer, 294th Infantry and 4th Mountain Divisions in support—the Corps attacked through Pirot toward Nis. In difficult terrain the Yugoslav Fifth Army put up tough resistance but the 11th Panzer broke the defense on the first day assisted by strong artillery and close air support. The 5th Army attempted to withdraw behind the Morava to reestablish the defense, but the 11th Panzer preempted them on the 9th by seizing Nis and crossing the river. At this point the 1st Panzer Group was in the Morava Valley and terrain better suited for panzers. After heavy fighting in the Paracin-Kragujevic area, von Kleist's forces routed the Fifth Army and opened the way to Belgrade. The 5th Panzer turned south at Nis, cut off Yugoslav troops around Leskovac and, then went under XL Panzer Corps' control for the invasion of Greece.⁹⁰

The XLI Panzer Corps attacked out of Timisoara on the 8th of April and met weak resistance in a swift advance through the Banat region. The "Gross Deutschland" Motorized Infantry Regiment took Pancevo on the 11th, while the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry Division moved to a point 45 miles north of Belgrade.⁹¹

Throughout the 10th von Kleist pursued his opponents up the Morava Valley and on the 11th his panzers slammed into the flank of the Yugoslavian Sixth Army. Already reeling from the attack of the XLI Panzer Corps, the Sixth Army disintegrated on the 12th. Von Kleist's narrow lines of communication stretched over 125 miles from Bulgaria, but there were no Yugoslav units available for a counterattack. A noose was tightening around Belgrade.⁹²

Given the success achieved by the Twelfth Army and the limited attacks of the Second, von Brauchitsch advanced the latter's start date from the 12th to the 10th. Despite the fact that the assembly of his force was incomplete,

von Weichs was eager to attack. His first objective was Zagreb, the second capital of Yugoslavia and the center of Croatian dissidence. Opposing the Second Army was the Yugoslav Fourth Army, a force largely composed of Croats, who were ready to welcome the Germans as liberators.⁹³

On 10 April the 14th Panzer Division of the XLVI Panzer Corps along with the LI Infantry and XLIX Mountain Corps erupted from their bridgeheads. The Fourth Army disintegrated and the 14th Panzer took Zagreb on the evening of the 10th after a single day's advance of nearly 100 miles.⁹⁴ Following the fall of Zagreb, von Weichs sent the 14th Panzer toward Vrbovsk to make contact with the Italians while he regrouped the XLIX Mountain and LI Corps on the Sava river for an advance on Sarajevo. The move on Sarajevo was an unplanned branch to his plan that was inspired by unexpected success. The city was the location of the Yugoslav High Command and was a key communications link in the rugged terrain of Bosnia. Its capture would disrupt any Yugoslav plans to evacuate large units to the interior.⁹⁵

Against feeble opposition the 8th Panzer and 16th Motorized Divisions of the XLVI Panzer Corps drove southeast through the Yugoslav Second Army and across the plain between the Sava and Drava rivers. Muddy roads provided the toughest resistance. On the 12th they reached Mitrovica and then advanced toward Belgrade in the rear of the Yugoslav Second Army Group. At this point, von List diverted the 8th Panzer toward Valjevo and Uzice while the 16th Motorized turned toward Zvornik to aid the rest of the Second Army in surrounding Sarajevo.⁹⁶

Meanwhile, on 12 April, elements of XLI, XLVI and XIV Panzer Corps' closed the ring on the Yugoslav capital from three directions. That evening a motorcycle company of the 2nd SS Division, XLI Panzer Corps crossed the Danube in captured boats and drove into the center of the city. At 1900 they

met the Mayor of Belgrade who promptly surrendered the city. Within a few hours advanced parties of the XLVI and XIV Panzer Corps arrived to find a mere company holding the capital.⁹⁷

The Italians joined the invasion on the 11th and the next day they made contact with the 14th Panzer Division at Vrbovsk. Now encircled, the Yugoslavian Seventh Army surrendered. The Italians proceeded down the Dalmation coast and upon entering Kotor and Sibenik found most of the Yugoslav fleet intact. Although one destroyer was scuttled by her crew, the other units were taken in by the Italian Navy. Meanwhile a small contingent of the Hungarian Third Army crossed the Yugoslav frontier on 11 April and pursued the retreating First Army, which offered no resistance.⁹⁸

The final days of the campaign were anti-climactic. By the 11th Slovenia and Croatia had broken with Belgrade and surrendered to the Germans. Some Croatian units in Dalmatia and the vicinity of Sarajevo began fighting the Serbs. The 14th Panzer sped through Bihac and Jajce toward Sarajevo from the west while the 8th Panzer and 16th Motorized Divisions advanced on the city from Uzice and Zvornik. All three divisions entered Sarajevo on the 15th and any Yugoslavian hopes of establishing a mountain redoubt collapsed.⁹⁹

The King, Simovic, and Mirkovic fled the country on the 14th and left General Kalafatovic, the Chief of the General Staff, to end the war. On the same day Kalafatovic sent two staff officers to ask von Kleist for terms. However, they could not find a Yugoslav civil authority acceptable to the Germans until the 17th. On that day the Germans flew Aleksander Cincar-Markovic to Belgrade where he signed an armistice to take effect on the 18th at 1200 hours. By the time the fighting ended the Germans had captured 254,000 Yugoslavian soldiers. OPERATION 25 lasted 13 days and had cost Germany 151 killed, 392 wounded and 15 missing.¹⁰⁰

The German campaign was successful in what it was immediately designed to accomplish. However, the major German units that blitzed through Yugoslavia departed quickly, first to Greece and then to Russia. The precipitate Axis sweep allowed many Yugoslav soldiers to escape to the hills with their weapons, shocked and disorganized but still capable of fighting. Twenty-two unenthusiastic Italian and four week German divisions remained to occupy the country. This force was aided by the Croation "Ustasa" and ad hoc units of Serb and Muslim Slav collaborators. The rapid German victory was merely a prelude to a vicious Guerrilla war that would eventually tie up 700,000 German troops and last until the invaders were evicted in 1945.¹⁰¹

The Execution phase of U.S. CAP includes the NCA's decision to employ a military COA and the transmission of an Execute Order through the CJCS to the CINC. This phase is complete when the crisis is resolved. Once more, the German procedure mirrored U.S. doctrine. The exception, however, was the absence of a position similar to that played by the CJCS. Hitler issued the Execute Order on 3 April and the CINC—von Brauchitsch—executed his campaign plan. The immediate crisis was resolved in rapid fashion and Germany's strategic objective was secure, at least for the moment.

The Relationship Between Military Means And Political Ends

Germany's overall strategy for 1941 focused on the destruction of the Soviet Union and peripheral attacks to eliminate British power in the Mediterranean. Once they crushed Russia, the Wehrmacht could focus on England. However, the inept Italian invasion of Greece created a chain reaction of events that disrupted Hitler's strategy. With British forces—albeit weak forces—deploying to Greece, the Balkan blitzkrieg was born from the perceived necessity to protect the southern flank of OPERATION BARBAROSSA and the Rumanian oilfields.

To secure the exposed flank of OPERATION MARITA Hitler required some form of accommodation from Yugoslavia. Preferably, the Yugoslavs would join the Axis without reservations. However, Yugoslavia's brave resistance to Hitler's political initiatives frustrated the German dictator from November 1940 through March 1941. When Yugoslavia finally buckled under German pressure, the result was a compromise that secured a new ally that refused to grant passage rights for German troops. At that point Hitler had achieved his political objective despite the fact that the optimal solution would have included freedom for operational movement through the country. After the coup, the situation was essentially unchanged as the new government declared its intention to honor the Tripartite Pact. Recalling Clausewitz' dictum that war is an extension of politics by other means, the invasion of Yugoslavia was unnecessary. This would be true unless Hitler's changed his political objective.

Hitler, however, decided that he needed the military extension of politics to better secure his initial objectives and gain another: the movement of German forces through Yugoslavia. Besides enhancing the chances of success in MARITA, transit rights through Yugoslavia would save time in the redeployment of forces for BARBAROSSA. OPERATION MARITA probably would have been successful--albeit more difficult and time consuming--without German movement through Yugoslavia. Perhaps the Führer added one more political objective: a demonstration of the fate that awaited those who wavered in support of the Third Reich. In the end these objectives translated to the military and political destruction of Yugoslavia.¹⁰²

In accordance with Hitler's directive the Wehrmacht marshaled the required means--in the form of two armies and an airfleet--from all corners of the German Reich to accomplish his bidding. While the Yugoslav's

outnumbered the Germans by approximately 2 to 1 in manpower, the Wehrmacht held 4 to 1 and 3 to 1 advantages in armor and aircraft. These forces constituted a vast overmatch in terms of combat power. Hitler could not afford to risk a setback. What he needed was a quick, decisive victory and the Wehrmacht delivered it.¹⁰³

Integrating Tactics And Operations With Strategy To Achieve Political Ends

The essence of operational art is the creative employment of tactical forces to achieve strategic aims. The strategic objective—or strategic end state—issued to the Wehrmacht was simple, "destroy Yugoslavia as a military power and sovereign state."¹⁰⁴ The conditions that would achieve that end state included the destruction of Yugoslavia's armed forces and political leadership, and the occupation of the nation's vital areas.

In terms of tactics the question was what to do once the army broke the defenses along the Yugoslav frontier. The German answer involved a combination that maximized the benefits of both variants of blitzkrieg tactics. Rapid breakthroughs were followed by four deep thrusts aimed at the seams and rear of the Yugoslav armies. These attacks disrupted the Yugoslavs' ability to control their forces, depriving them of initiative and freedom of action. German forces penetrating into the rear of Yugoslav army groups prevented an orderly retreat to the south or the more defensible terrain of the country's rugged hinterland. The net effect was a paralysis of the Yugoslav High Command, the swift capture of Belgrade and the fragmentation of the defending armies.

As Belgrade and Sarajevo fell, the remnants of the battered Yugoslav Army collapsed for lack of effective command and control. The Wehrmacht captured—or forced out of the country—most of the political leadership when they seized Belgrade and Uzice. Finally, they rapidly occupied Yugoslavia's few

remaining cities and lines of communications against negligible resistance.

However, when viewed holistically the campaign was flawed. The Germans failed to look beyond their immediate strategic objective to long term conflict termination and postconflict operations. While the Germans and their collaborators planned for both requirements, they did not adequately prepare for the resistance movement that started a few months after the invasion. The German failure to account for the proud and combative character of the Yugoslav peoples and the lack of enlightened occupation policies resulted in a conflict that was never effectively terminated on German terms. The long term cost to the German Reich arguably outweighed the success of OPERATION 25.

Establishing the conditions for tactical success represent another important element of operational art. The German plan did this by providing the attacking forces with enough combat power to achieve overwhelming force ratios at the point of attack on each line of operation. Furthermore, through operational movement the German force groupings were positioned to attack weaknesses in the Yugoslav defenses. However, providing combat units and arraying them is not enough to ensure tactical success. The Germans provided the necessary logistics to sustain their force through a myriad of successful improvisations. To facilitate the success of the ground attacks, the Luftwaffe's strikes on Belgrade disrupted Yugoslav command and control to a degree that severely limited a coherent enemy response. Finally, the portion of the plan that provided for limited objective attacks to seize key terrain—river crossings and mountain passes—in the Second Army's zone set the conditions for success on the lines of operation emanating from Austria and Hungary.

Another ingredient contributing to tactical success was the effort to

support Croatian dissidents in fragmenting the Yugoslav state. Once attacked, Croatian units treated the Germans as liberators and actually engaged other Yugoslav forces. Since the Croats needed little encouragement to revive old feuds, the role played by German agents in this regard remains ambiguous. Nonetheless, the effort demonstrates a clear attempt to facilitate tactical success. For their cooperation the Croats received a significant degree of autonomy after the invasion.¹⁰⁵

The tactical successes and the operational movements executed in OPERATION 25 would have been impossible without the cooperation of Germany's four partners. Despite the Tripartite Pact, the ad hoc participation of Axis nations took on the characteristics of a coalition without a unified command structure. While Hitler laid the foundation for successful combined operations through his diplomatic maneuvers; a large degree of credit goes to the Wehrmacht's liaison officers. Von Paulus' travels to Rumania and Hungary; von Rintelen's efforts in Italy, and von List's coordination with the Bulgarians proved critical in establishing the conditions for tactical and operational success. Furthermore, the coordination conducted by the German Chief of Transportation with his counterparts in Bulgaria and Rumania solved the problems inherent in staging and sustaining the invasion forces.

Centers Of Gravity

The German plan clearly reveals the great importance they attached to Belgrade. Of the five major groupings of German ground combat forces, three were directed on the capital. In addition, the Luftwaffe's first objective was an attack on the city, designed to disrupt command and control. As the capital city and the center of political and military leadership, Belgrade was an important objective. Furthermore, its capture provided for the link-up of German forces in the rear of two army groups. However, once the

political and military leadership fled to Uzice and Sarajevo, the capture of Belgrade lost much of its importance apart from symbolism.

For Yugoslavia the center of gravity rested in its strongest field force: the Third Army Group. This was the only organization positioned to establish contact with the British and Greeks or delay von List and von Kleist long enough to give the rest of the armed forces the chance to reach the hinterland. Moreover, it had the potential to attack Italian forces in Albania. Once they defeated the Third Army Group the rapid advances of the German 12th Army and 1st Panzer Group made plan R-41 useless. Whether the German High Command identified the Third Army Group as a "center of gravity" is unknown—none of their accounts refer to it as such—but they obviously grasped the importance of the force and initially employed von Kleist's and von List's forces to destroy it.

Sequencing

Scrutiny of OPERATION 25 reveals a sequence comprised of three distinct phases. The first phase included the operational movements to position the invasion forces in Austria, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. Phase two consisted of the Luftwaffe's initial attacks, executed simultaneously with the Twelfth Army's strike through Macedonia to cut Yugoslav links with Greece and to establish contact with the Italians, von Kleist's thrust toward the Morava valley to rupture the defense and gain access to a route to Belgrade, and the limited objective attacks of the Second Army. Success in these operations would defeat most of the Yugoslav Army and set the preconditions for attaining operational objectives. In the final phase, the Germans seized Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo while Italian and Hungarian forces entered the conflict. This phase was designed to eliminate the last centers of Yugoslavian political and military leadership while the Yugoslav Army was

destroyed and the rest of the country was overrun.

The sequence of operations followed the German design to a degree seldom equaled in military history. The plan and its execution constitute a fine example of centralized planning and decentralized execution. This was manifested by the fact that von Brauchitsch's only major decision's of the campaign were advancing the start date for the Second Army's attack and approving the Second Army's branch to seize Sarajevo.

Viewed holistically, OPERATION 25 was one phase of a two campaign strategy to eject the British from the Balkans. It was timed to commence with OPERATION MARITA and most of the Twelfth Army units employed in Yugoslavia eventually attacked south into Greece. Moreover, the rapid thrust of von List's army through Yugoslavia set the conditions for tactical and operational success in Greece.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The strongest conclusion of this monograph is that the German conduct of crisis action planning was remarkably similar to the procedures employed in the U.S. military today. The same holds true for the U.S. Army's doctrine for operational art.

In response to the Yugoslav crisis Hitler and the Wehrmacht's senior leadership employed a coordinated process that led to a successful military response. Their methods were similar to the six phases described in JOPS Volume IV. The only major differences that can be derived from this analysis were the lack of a German equivalent to the CJCS and the emphasis they placed on the coordination of combined operations. The first difference is insignificant but the second is important. We cannot escape from fact that our military will probably respond to future crises in a combined environment. The Germans placed great effort on coordination missions and

reaped significant rewards. While the combat forces of their allies did little fighting, OPERATION 25 would have been infinitely more difficult without the solid cooperation of Italy, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria.

German political and military actions were synchronized to produce and position the required force with appropriate objectives to conquer Yugoslavia. They employed that military force to attain strategic goals in a theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of OPERATION 25. Moreover, their plan set the conditions for tactical success. Von Brauchitsch and his staff linked tactical actions to strategic ends. They discerned what military conditions would achieve desired ends and determined a sequence of tactical actions to create those conditions. Finally, the Wehrmacht's leadership decided how to employ available military resources to complete the required sequence of actions. None of this should be news to military professionals in the United States Army since many of the operational concepts employed by the Wehrmacht are found in FM 100-5.

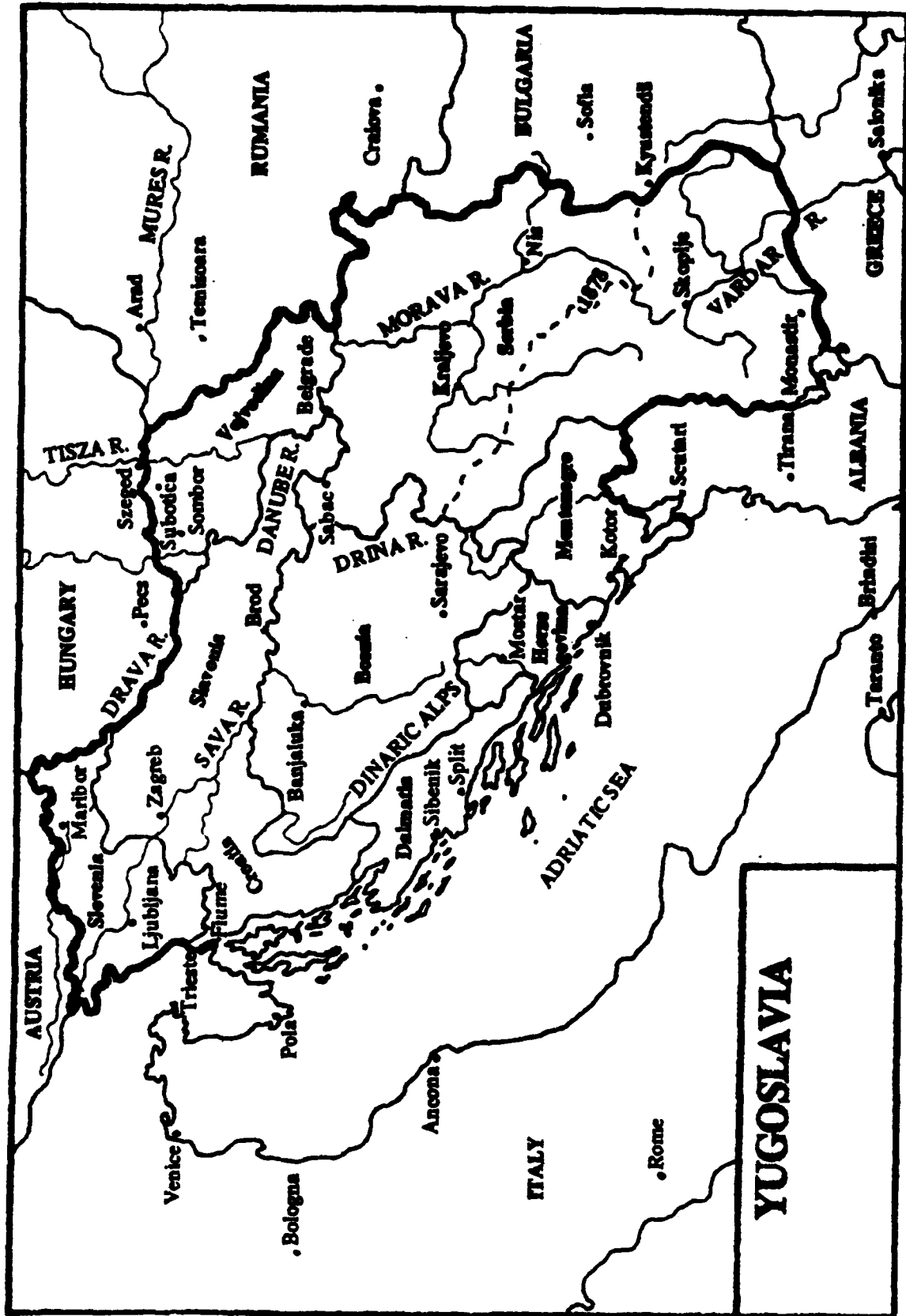
From this monograph we can draw four useful implications for doctrine. Two apply to crisis action planning, one relates to combined operations and the one is applicable to crisis action planning and operational art.

U.S. military professionals preparing for contingencies involving crisis action planning should look to JOPS Volume IV as a point of departure. As written, the publication provides a thorough description of the six phase crisis action process and the myriad of responsibilities, reports and functions involved in the system. The publication, however, fails to address the role that combined operations play in many crises. This omission should be corrected with some reference to coordination with coalition or alliance partners. This is particularly relevant given the increasing likelihood that America will respond to global and regional threats in combined environments.

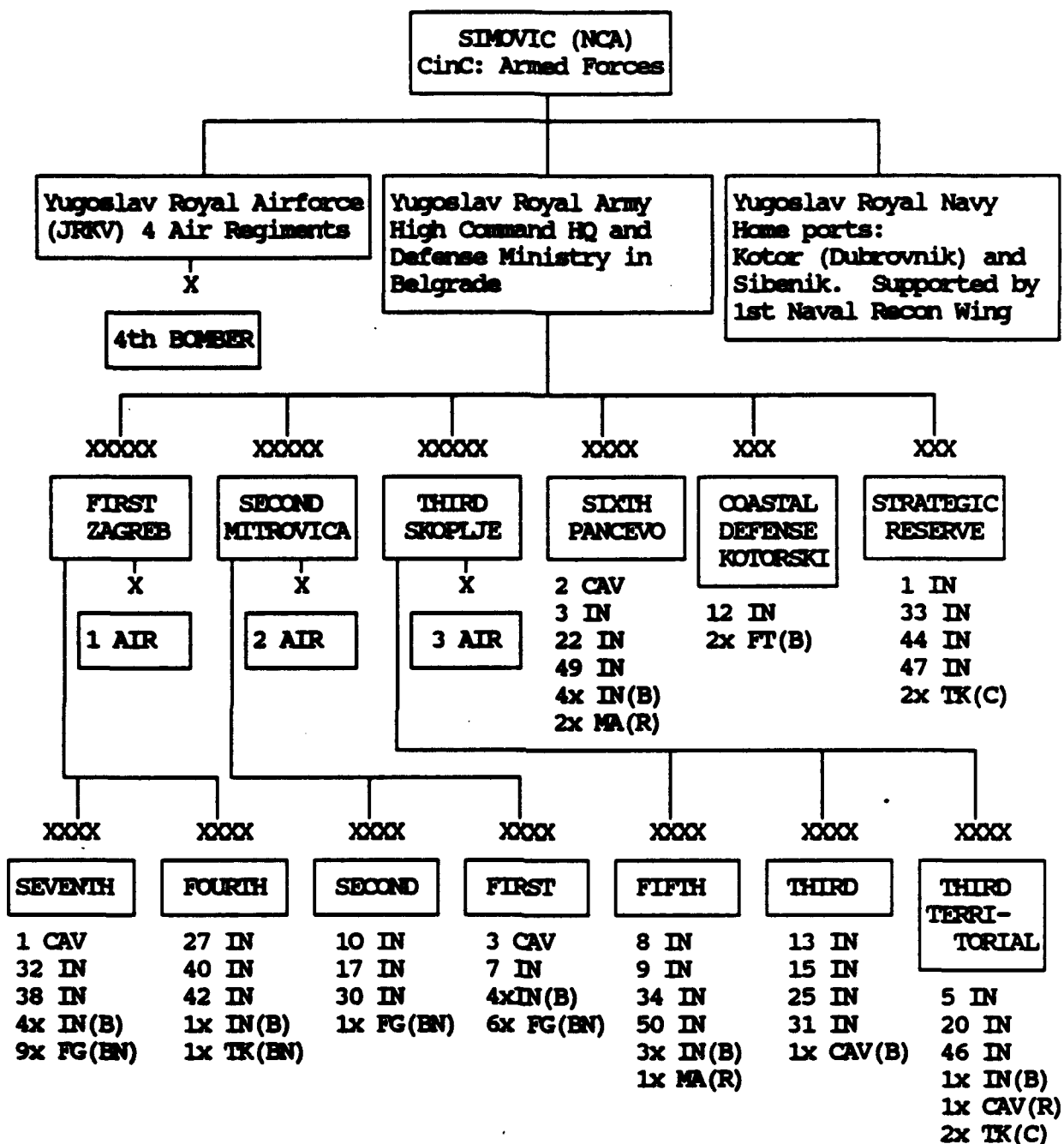
Conversely, Army doctrine for combined operations established in FM 100-8 offers no guidance on the peculiar requirements of time-sensitive planning. In the past, the U.S. Army solved the problems inherent in combined operations through a process of trial and error. This inevitably was an inefficient and time-consuming endeavor. Time sensitive or crisis situations will only exacerbate the problems of combined warfare. We simply cannot waste precious resources in experiments during the early stages of a crisis. This too should be corrected with guidance aligned with JOPS Volume IV.

Finally, JOPS Volume IV fails to address the imperative to plan for conflict termination and postconflict operations. The German experience in Yugoslavia demonstrates the dangers involved when military leaders fail to take a long term view of a crisis. Some will argue that this responsibility rests in the hands of political leaders. However, we do not have the prerogative to choose our missions in a crisis. Therefore, we must plan for long term solutions if the situation calls for them. Given a time sensitive situation, a narrow focus on the immediate results of crisis response is a trap to be avoided. JOPS Volume IV should be revised to include some reference to planning for conflict termination and postconflict operations.

Another implication for crisis action planning involves the validity of the U.S. military's crisis action procedures. While accounting for the environmental differences previously noted, the German reaction to the Yugoslav crisis provides evidence that the concepts used today were valid in a conflict of the past. Similarly, the essential elements of operational art described in FM 100-5, were operative in Germany's planning and execution of OPERATION 25. Thus, the analysis of the Yugoslav campaign supports current doctrine by providing an historical precedent where similar methodologies were successfully employed.



Appendix 2 (Yugoslavian Military Organization: April 1941¹⁰⁷)



KEY: Division sized units are listed below each army. A number followed by x indicates a multiple of independent sub-divisional units. IN=Infantry; TK=Tank; CAV=Cavalry; FG=Frontier Guard; FT=Fortress; MA=Motorized Artillery (R)=Regiment (B)=Brigade; (BN)=Battalion; and (C)=Company.

NOTE: This organization depicts the Yugoslav Army at full mobilization. On 6 April 1941 only the Third and Fifth armies reached full mobilization. The strategic reserve was never constituted.

Appendix 3 (Yugoslavian Army and Airforce Equipment: April 1941)

Army:¹⁰⁸

1900 Mortars
800 Anti-Tank Guns of Light Calibers
823 75mm Field Guns
180 105mm Field Howitzers
3000 World War I Vintage Howitzers of Various Calibers
250 66/75/78mm Anti-aircraft Guns
50 Renault R 35 Light Tanks, 10.8 tons, 37mm main gun (1940 French).
50 Skoda S-1D Light Tanks, 4.5 tons, 47mm main gun (1938 Czech).
50 Renault NC-27 Light Tanks, 7.9 tons, 37mm main gun (1927 French)
50 Renault M-17 Light Tanks, 6.7 tons, 1 machine gun (1921 French)

Of Yugoslavia's 200 tanks only the R35s could compete with German armor. The Skodas and Renault NC-27s could be usefully employed in defensive positions. The Renault M-17s were obsolete WWI designs.

Airforce:¹⁰⁹

Fighters:

73 Messerschmitt Bf-109E-3 (1938 German)
44 Hawker Hurricane I (1935 British)
31 Hawker Fury (1933 British/obsolete monoplanes)
12 Rogozowski IK-2 (1936 Yugoslav/obsolete biplanes)
6 Rogozowski IK-3 (1938 Yugoslav/modern)
166 Total Fighters (117 Front Line)

Bombers:

58 Dornier Do 17Ka Medium Bomber (1937 German)
45 Savoia-Marchetti SM 79-I Medium Bomber (1934 Italian)
36 Bristol Blenheim I Light Bomber (1935 British)
139 Total Bombers (103 Front Line)

Reconnaissance:

12 Caproni Ca 310 (1936 Italian)
15 Caproni Ca 311 (1936 Italian)
12 Westland Lysander (1936 British)
75 Breguet 19A2 (19?? French)
114 Total Reconnaissance Aircraft (39 Front Line)

Naval Aircraft:

12 Dornier Do 17Ka Medium Bomber/Reconnaissance (1937 German)
12 Rogozowski SIM-XIV-H Seaplane (1938 Yugoslav)
50 Harriot H-41/Heinkel He-8 Reconnaissance (19?? German)
12 Dornier Do 22Kj Seaplane (1934 German)
86 Total Naval Aircraft (24 Front Line)

Total: 405 Aircraft including 117 Modern Fighters and 103 Modern Bombers.

Appendix 4 (Yugoslavian Naval Equipment: April 1941¹¹⁰)

Navy

Destroyers:

- 1 Dubrovnik Class, 1880 tons, 37 kts, 4x5.5" and 2x3.4" Guns, 6 torpedos (Yugoslav 1932)
- 3 Beograd Class, 1210 tons, 38 kts, 4x4.7" Guns, 6 torpedos (Yugoslav 1939)
- 4 Destroyers Total

Torpedo Boats:

- 4 T-1 Class, 262 tons, 28 kts, 2x2.6" guns, 4 torpedos (Austrian 1915)
- 4 T-5 Class, 266 tons, 28 kts, 2x2.6" guns, 4 torpedos (Austrian 1915)
- 8 Torpedo Boats Total

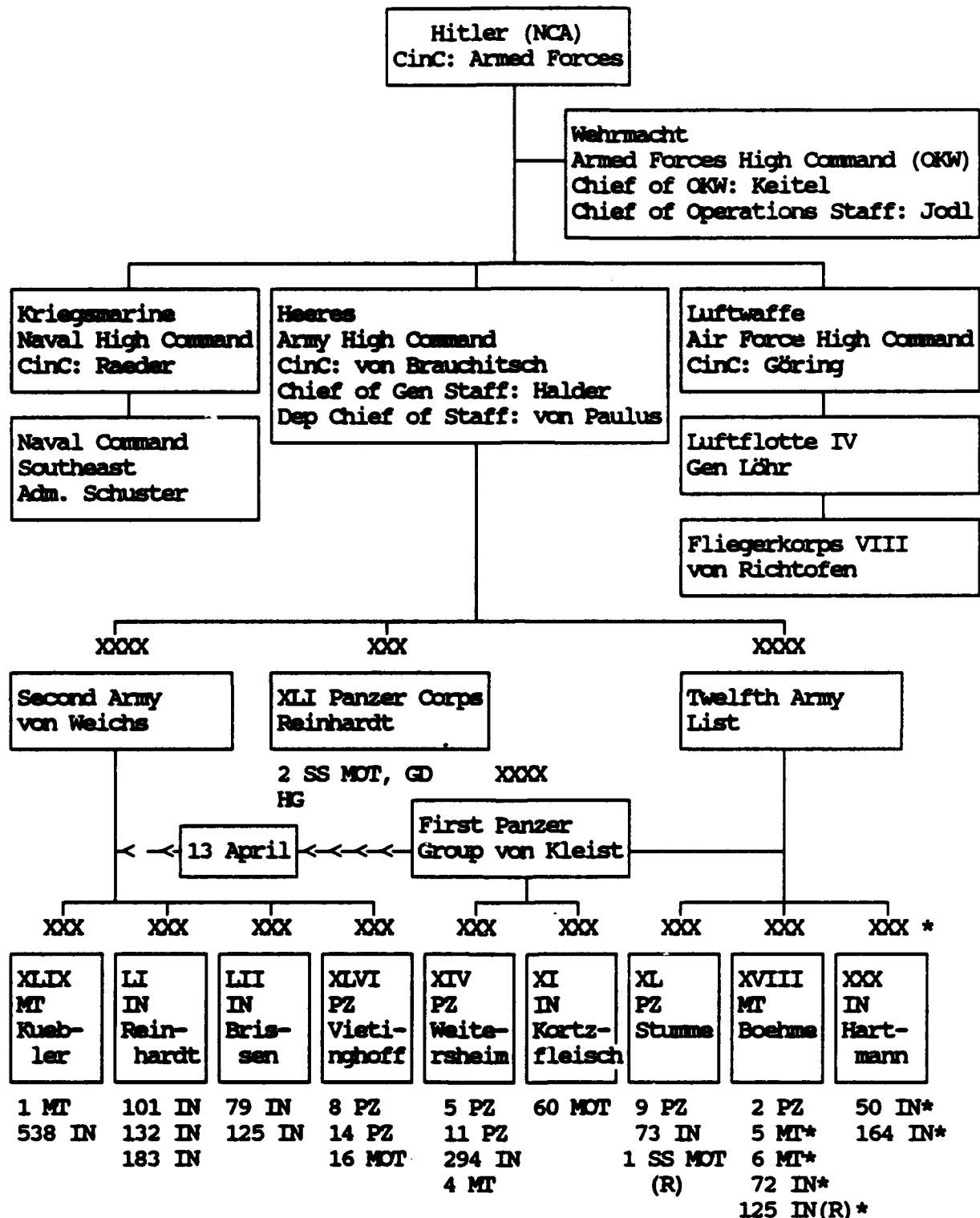
Motor Torpedo Boats:

- 8 Orjen Class, 60 tons, 34 kts, 2 torpedos (Yugoslav 1937)
- 2 Uskok Class, 20 tons, 37 kts, 2 torpedos (Yugoslav 1927)
- 10 Motor Torpedo Boats Total

Submarines:

- 2 Smeli Class 600 tons, 14/9 kts, 1x3.9" gun, 6 torpedos (Yugoslav 1929)
- 2 Hrabri Class 975 tons, 15/10 kts, 2x4" guns, 6 torpedos (Yugoslav 1927)
- 4 Submarines Total

Appendix 5 (German Military Organization for OPERATION 25: April 1941¹¹¹)



KEY: Division sized units are listed below each corps. MT=Mountain; IN=Infantry; PZ=Panzer; MOT=Motorized Infantry; GD="Gross Deutschland" Motorized Infantry Regiment HG="Herman Göring" Panzer Regiment; SS=Waffen SS; (R)=Regiment and *=Did not participate in Operation 25.

Appendix 6 (German Military Data: March-April 1941)

Distribution of the Germany Army: March 1941 ¹¹²					
LOCATION	TYPE OF DIVISION				TOTAL
	INFANTRY	CAVALRY	MOTORIZED	PANZER	
WEST (France, Belgium & Holland)	56	—	4	2	62
EAST (Staging for Barbarossa)	30	1	—	3	34
GERMANY	51	—	6	9	66
BALKANS (Bulgaria & Rumania)	9	—	2	6	17
NORTH (Denmark & Norway)	10	—	—	—	10
AFRICA	—	—	—	1	1
TOTAL	156	1	12	21	190

German Army and Air Force Equipment, OPERATION 25: April 1941

Army: ¹¹³					
	4xMT DIV	8xIN DIV	5xPZ DIV	4xMOT DIV	TOTAL
Personnel	52,224	141,872	78,000	65,000	337,096
50mm Light Mortars	216	648	—	228	1,092
81mm Medium Mortars	144	432	150	144	870
120mm Heavy Mortars	96	—	—	—	96
Anti-Tank Rocket Launchers	—	720	225	252	1,197
37mm/50mm/75mm Anti-Tank	196	576	360	536	1,168
75mm Field Guns	96	—	—	—	96
75mm Field Howitzers	144	144	90	72	450
105mm Field Howitzers	48	192	120	96	456
150mm Field Howitzers	48	240	120	120	528
Motor-Transport Vehicles	3,342	8,072	14,500	11,200	37,204
AFV	—	3	410	328	741
Tanks of various types	—	—	875	—	875

Air Force (Luftflotte 4):¹¹⁴

Fighters:

365 Messerschmitt Bf-109E
85 Messerschmitt Bf-110C
 450 Total Fighters (All Front Line)

Bombers:

120 Dornier Do 17Z Medium Bomber
 85 Heinkel He 111H Medium Bomber
 45 Junkers Ju 88A Medium Bomber
120 Junkers Ju 87B Dive Bomber
 370 Total Bombers (All Front Line)

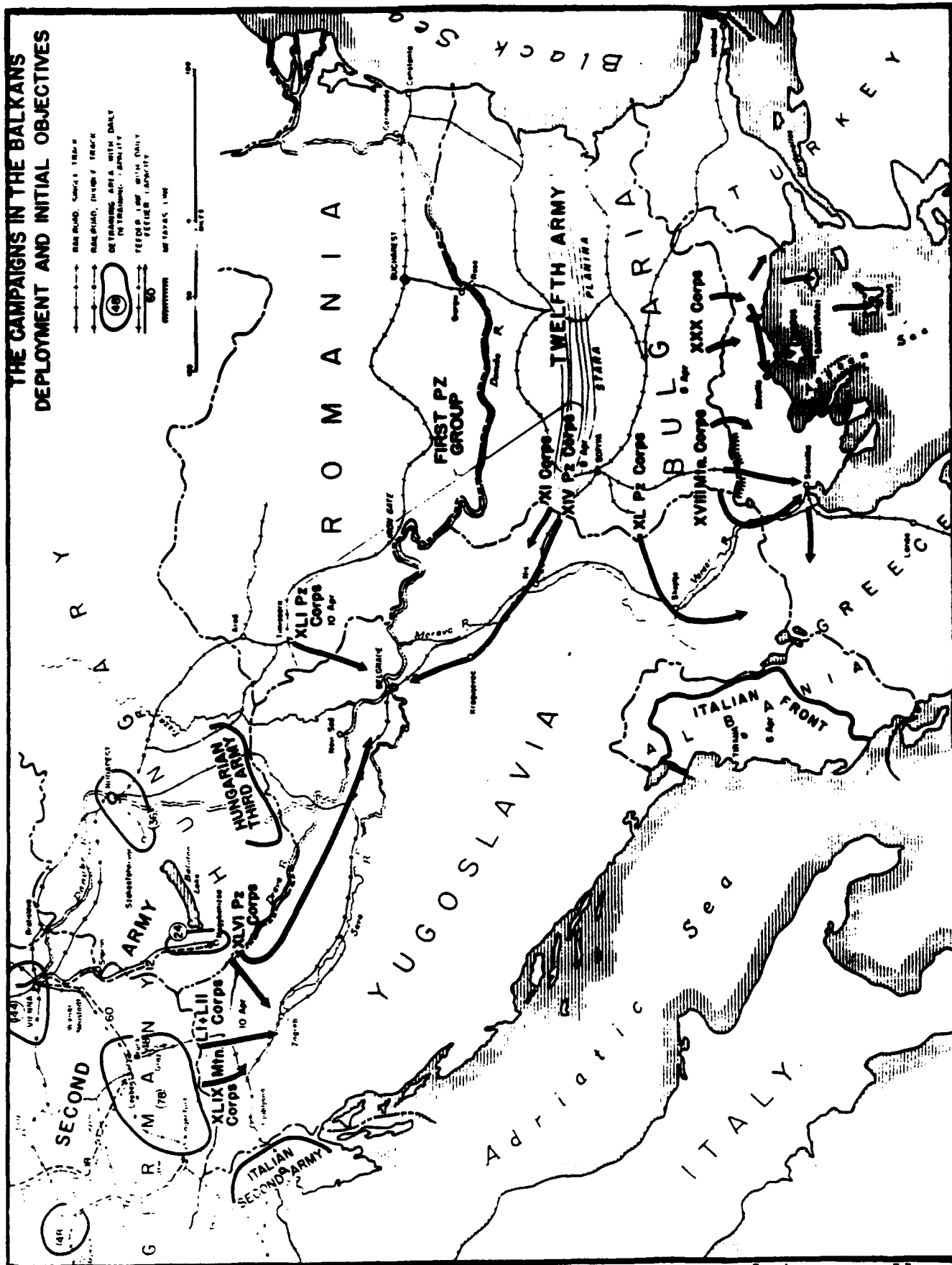
Reconnaissance:

50 Short Range, Messerschmitt Bf-109, Henschel Hs-126 and Fieseler Fi-156.
120 Long Range, Dornier Do 17
 170 Total Reconnaissance Aircraft (All Front Line)

Total: 990 Aircraft including 450 Modern Fighters and 370 Modern Bombers.

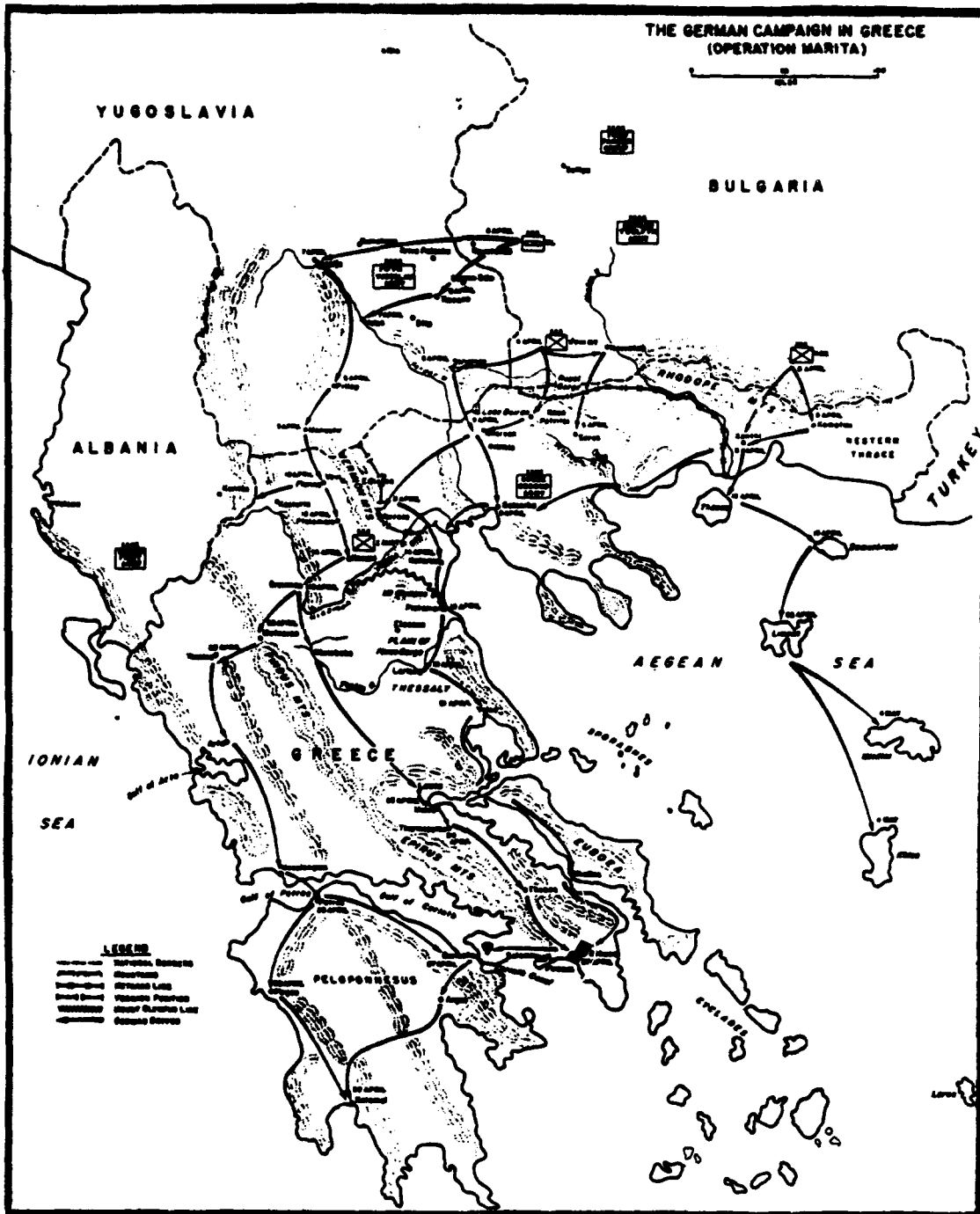
Fliegerkorps X provided on call support to Luftflotte IV with 168 aircraft.
 The Italian Regia Aeronautica massed 666 aircraft for OPERATION 25.
 Total: 1,824 aircraft available to the Axis in OPERATION 25

THE CAMPAIGNS IN THE BALKANS





Appendix 9 (Map of Operation 25 in Southern Yugoslavia¹¹⁷)



ENDNOTES

¹Alan Palmer, "Operation Punishment," in History of the Second World War, ed. Sir Basil Liddel Hart and Barrie Pitt (London: BPC Publishing Ltd., 1966), 378-379 and 390-391. German plans for Yugoslavia prior to 27 March 1941 are a point of contention. Most sources describe the Germans as unprepared, however, two state that Halder considered the contingency in October 1940. Correlli Barnett, Hitler's Generals, (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., 1989), 118; and Martin L. Van Creveld, Hitler's Strategy, 1940-1941: The Balkan Clue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 145.

²This paradigm for the analysis of operational art was derived from James R. McDonough, "War in the Falklands: The Use and Disuse of Theory" (School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1987), 1-3.

³U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4. Joint Operation Planning System, Vol. IV, Crisis Action Procedures (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1991), I-1.

⁴National Defense University, Armed Forces Staff College Publication 1. The Joint Staff Officer's Guide (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 7-3.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸National Defense University, 7-3, 7-7 and 7-9-7-12; and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4, I-1, II-2-II-3 and A-1.

⁹The responsible CINC is designated as the "supported CINC." The commanders of other unified or specified commands are called "supporting CINCs."

¹⁰National Defense University, 7-3, 7-7, and 7-12-7-16; and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4, I-1, II-3-II-4 and B-1-B-3.

¹¹This, however, cannot be taken for granted and the CINC may have to distil viable strategic objectives from the political goals.

¹²National Defense University, 7-3, 7-7 and 7-16-7-21; and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4, I-2, II-4-II-6 and C-1-C-5.

¹³National Defense University, 7-3, 7-7 and 7-21-7-23; and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4, I-2, II-6-II-7 and D-1-D-2.

¹⁴National Defense University, 7-3, 7-7 and 7-23-7-26; and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4, I-2, II-7-II-9 and E-1-E-4.

¹⁵National Defense University, 7-3, 7-7 and 7-26-7-29; and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4, I-2, II-9-II-10 and F-1-F-4.

¹⁶National Defense University, 7-3, 7-7 and 7-9-7-29; and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 5-02.4, I-2, II-1-II-10 and A-1-A-2.

¹⁷U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5. Operations (Final Draft) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 19 January 1993), 5-2.

¹⁸Ibid., 5-3.

¹⁹U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1991) 76; and U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-8. Combined Army Operations (Preliminary Draft) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1992), GL-2.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-8. Combined Army Operations, 1-9.

²²Ibid.

²³This chart was derived from pages 3-8 of this monograph and National Defense University, 7-3.

²⁴U.S. Department of the Army, Special Warfare Area Handbook for Yugoslavia, vol. 1; (Washington, D.C.: American University, 1959), 74-79; and Victor W. Madej, ed., German Operations in the Balkans (Spring 1941-1944) (New Martinsville, WV: Game Marketing Co., 1979), 2-3 and 34.

²⁵U.S. Department of the Army, Special Warfare Area Handbook for Yugoslavia, 78-80; and Madej, 2-3 and 34.

²⁶Madej, 2-3 and 34-35.

²⁷HQ Department of the Army, Special Warfare Area Handbook for Yugoslavia, 80-82; and Madej, 4.

²⁸Richard Rustin, "Tito and His Partisan Army: Yugoslavia, 1941-45," Strategy and Tactics 81 (July/August 1980): 5; and Palmer, 374.

²⁹Palmer, 374; and Rustin, 5.

³⁰Rustin, 5.

³¹Malbone W. Graham, "Constitutional Development 1914-1941," in Yugoslavia, ed. by Robert J. Kerner (Berkley: University of California Press, 1949), 118-131.

³²Jacob B. Hoptner, Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 25-26; and Palmer, 375-376.

³³Palmer, 376.

- ³⁴Hoptner, 23-25, 174-175 and 180; and Palmer, 375.
- ³⁵Olivia Manning, "Rumanian Coup D'etat," in History of the Second World War, ed. Sir Basil Liddell Hart and Barrie Pitt (London: BPC Publishing Ltd., 1966), 253-255; and Palmer, 374-375.
- ³⁶Hoptner, 10-14; and Palmer, 375.
- ³⁷Hoptner, 103-108; and Palmer, 375.
- ³⁸Hoptner, 175-180; and Palmer, 375.
- ³⁹U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260. The German Campaigns in the Balkans (Spring 1941) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 1954), 4-8.
- ⁴⁰U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 2-6; and Van Creveld, 52-55.
- ⁴¹Lee J. Ready, The Forgotten Axis: Germany's Partners and Foreign Volunteers in World War II (Jefferson, N. C.: McFarland and Company, 1987), 76-77; Manning, 255; and Palmer, 375.
- ⁴²Edwin Packer, "Italian Fiasco: The Attack on Greece," in History of the Second World War, ed. Sir Basil Liddell Hart and Barrie Pitt (London: BPC Publishing Ltd., 1966), 263-268; and Hermann Burkhardt Mueller-Hillebrand. MS # P-030. The German Campaign in the Balkans, 1941: A Model of Crisis Planning (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Chief Of Military History, August 1950), 4.
- ⁴³U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 86-87.
- ⁴⁴Ready, 73-77.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., 402-403.
- ⁴⁶Stephen Hylsup, John Newton, and Henry Woodhead, eds., Conquest of the Balkans (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books Inc., 1990), 16 and 23.
- ⁴⁷Palmer, 376.
- ⁴⁸Frank C. Littlefield, Germany and Yugoslavia, 1933-1941: The German Conquest of Yugoslavia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 95-100; Hoptner, 209-211 and 216-219; Palmer, 376; and Van Creveld 126-128.
- ⁴⁹Hoptner, 239-241; Littlefield, 105 and 109; and Palmer, 376-377.
- ⁵⁰Hoptner, 250-257; Littlefield, 113-120; and Palmer, 377.
- ⁵¹Hoptner, 256-259; Littlefield, 113-120; and Palmer, 377-378.
- ⁵²Hoptner, 41, 157-159 and 160-161; and Palmer, 376.
- ⁵³Jozo Tomasevich, The Chetniks: War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 31.

⁵⁴U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 33-38; and Ronald L. Tarnstrom, Handbooks of Armed Forces: The Balkans, part II (Lindsborg, KS Trogen Books, 1981), 128.

⁵⁵U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 35; and Tomasevich, 58.

⁵⁶Hoptner, 160-161; Tarnstrom, 100-101 and 128-129; and Tomasevich, 58-59.

⁵⁷Christopher Shores and Brian Cull, Air War for Yugoslavia, Greece and Crete (London: Grub Street, 1987), 173-175; and Tarnstrom, 112-116.

⁵⁸Tarnstrom, 107-108; and Tomasevich, 59-60.

⁵⁹Tomasevich, 57.

⁶⁰Ibid., 55-57.

⁶¹U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 36-37; Shores, and Cull, 187-192; and Tarnstrom, 128-129.

⁶²Mueller-Hillebrand, MS # P-030, 14-20.

⁶³Charles K. Pickar, "Blitzkrieg: Operational Art or Tactical Craft?" (School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1992), 2-6.

⁶⁴Matthew Cooper, The German Airforce 1933-1945: An Anatomy of Failure (New York: Jane's Publishing Company Inc., 1981), 196-197.

⁶⁵Oberkommando des Heeres, Truppen Führung, Tiel 1., 1933, trans. (Fort Leavenworth: The Command and General Staff School Press, 1936); and Pickar, 6 and 18-20.

⁶⁶Palmer, 378; and Van Creveld, 144-145.

⁶⁷Keitel was the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command (Oberkommando des Wehrmacht or OKW) Jodl was the OKW Chief of the Operations Staff.

⁶⁸Adolf Hitler as quoted in Madsj, 22.

⁶⁹Franz Halder, The Private War Journal of Generaloberst Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the German Army (OKH), vol. VI, The Campaign in the Balkans and Russia. Part I: 21 February 1941 - 31 July 1941 (HQ U.S. Army, Europe: Historical Division, Foreign Military Studies Branch, March 1950), 23.

⁷⁰U.S. Department of the Navy, Fuehrer Directives and Other Top Level Directives of the German Armed Forces 1939-1941, vol. I, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1948), 161-163; and Halder, 37.

⁷¹U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 22-23 and 27.

⁷²Ibid., 29-30.

⁷³Halder, 38.

⁷⁴Mueller-Hillebrand, MS # P-030, 55; and HQ Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 30 and 38.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Hermann Burkhardt Mueller-Hillebrand, MS # P-108. Germany and Her Allies in World War II: A Record of Axis Collaboration Problems, part II, Collaboration With Individual States (HQ U.S. Army, Europe: Historical Division, Foreign Military Studies Branch, 1955), 12-13, 154-157, 182-183 and 208-209; and Van Creveld, 145-147 and 116-119.

⁷⁷Halder, 43; U.S. Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 20-260, 29-41; Madej, 37-47; and Palmer, 379.

⁷⁸Cooper, The German Airforce, 196-197; Shores, and Cull, 171-172 and 184; Van Creveld, 153; and Werner Uhlich, Deutsche Decknamen des Zweiten Weltkrieges (Berg Am See: Kurt Vowinkel Verlag, 1987), 46.

⁷⁹Littlefield, 121-128.

⁸⁰Halder, 49-50 and 52; Hoptner, 288; and Shores, and Cull, 173-177.

⁸¹Mueller-Hillebrand, MS # P-030, 36.

⁸²Ibid., 35-49.

⁸³Ibid., 49-52.

⁸⁴Halder, 45.

⁸⁵Cooper, The German Airforce, 197-198; and Shores, and Cull, 195-199.

⁸⁶U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 49-50; Cooper, The German Airforce, 197-198; Palmer, 379; and Shores, and Cull, 195-199.

⁸⁷U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 52-53 and 55-57; Hylsop, Newton, and Woodhead, 48; and Uhlich, 81.

⁸⁸U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 86-87.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 50-52; and Tarnstrom, 131.

⁹¹U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 52; and Tarnstrom, 131.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Halmuth, Greiner, "The Balkans, 1941," in World War II German Military Studies: A Collection of 213 Special Reports on the Second World War Prepared by Former Officers of the Wehrmacht for the United States Army, vol. 7, part IV, The OKW War Diary Series, ed. Donald S. Detwiler (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1979), 41; and U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 53.

⁹⁴U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 58-61; and Tarnstrom, 132.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Hylsup, Newton, and Woodhead, 55-56.

⁹⁸U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 60-61.

⁹⁹Ibid., 61-63.

¹⁰⁰U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 63-64; and Palmer, 391.

¹⁰¹Rustin, 5-6. Hitler issued three directives addressing postconflict operations in Yugoslavia: Directive 26 of 3 April 41; Directive 27; of 14 April 41 and an unnumbered directive dated 18 April 41. These documents addressed the division of the country among the Axis, cooperation with allies, OPERATION MARITA and the spoils of war. None of them provided a plan for the pacification of Yugoslavia or for bringing the populace into the axis fold. HQ Department of the Navy, 164-171.

¹⁰²Adolf Hitler as quoted in Madej, 22.

¹⁰³For details on the data used to determine these force ratios see Appendices 3 and 6 on pages 47 and 50. Italian and Hungarian forces are not included in the Wehrmacht's figures. However, when they are included, the Axis verses Yugoslav force ratios are approximately 1 to 1 in manpower, 5 to 1 in armor and 4.5 to 1 in aircraft.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Mueller-Hillebrand, MS # P-108, 216-218.

¹⁰⁶This map was copied from U.S. Department of the Army, Special Warfare Handbook for Yugoslavia, 14a.

¹⁰⁷This diagram was derived from U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 36-37; and Tarnstrom, 100-101, 107, 112-113 and 128-129.

¹⁰⁸Tarnstrom, 99-101 and 128-129.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 112-116.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 107-108.

¹¹¹This diagram was derived from U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 39-41, 81 and Appendix I; and Tarnstrom, 129-131.

¹¹²This chart was copied from Mueller-Hillebrand, MS # P-030, 14.

¹¹³Precise figures for German manpower and equipment employed in OPERATION 25 were difficult to determine. The figures in this chart are an estimate—they do not include army or corps troops—based on typical unit strengths and incomplete data found in John A. English, On Infantry (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984), 69-71; Bryan I. Fugate, Operation Barbarossa: Strategy and Tactics on the Eastern Front (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1984), 346-348; and James Lucas, Alpine Elite: German Mountain Troops of World War II (New York: Jane's Publishing Inc., 1980), 192-196.

¹¹⁴Precise figures for German aircraft—by type—were difficult to determine. These figures are an estimate based on standard Luftwaffe unit strengths and incomplete data from U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 29; Cooper, The German Air Force, 196-197; Shores, and Cull, 171-172 and 184; and Tarnstrom, 131.

¹¹⁵This map was copied from U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 42.

¹¹⁶This map was copied from U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 49.

¹¹⁷This map was copied from U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet No. 20-260, 70.

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